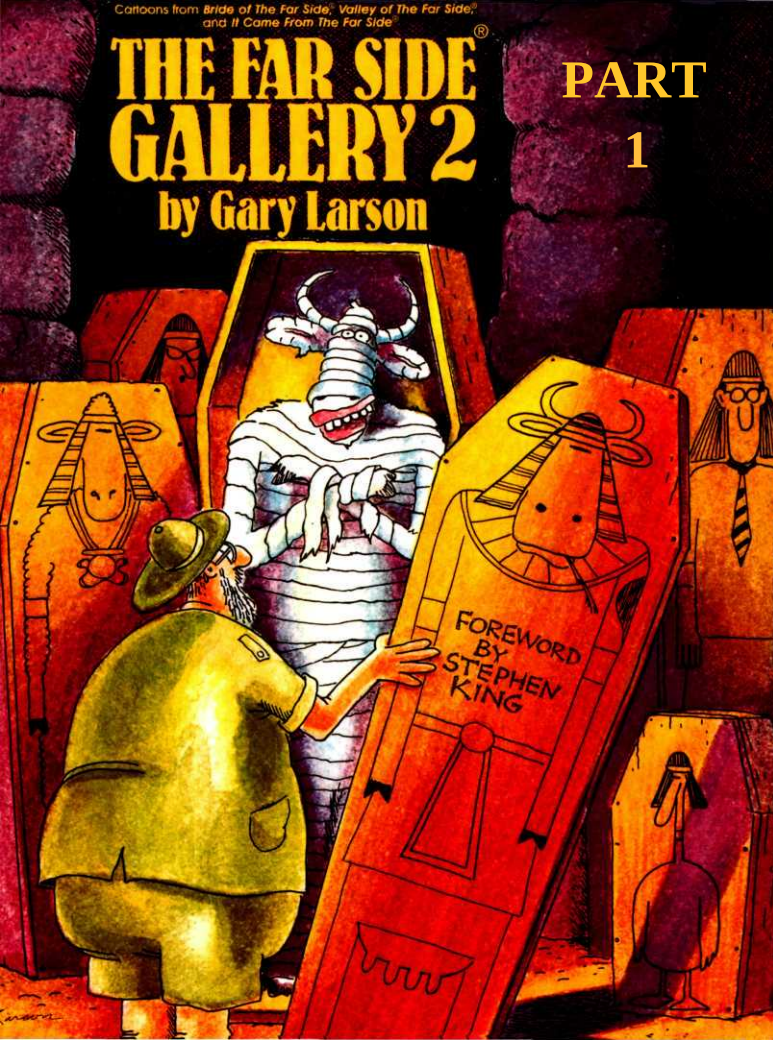

Cartoons from Bride of The Far Side,® Valley of The Far Side,® and It Came From The Far Side®
THE FAR SIDE® GALLERY 2
by Gary Larson
PART 1
FOREWORD BY STEPHEN KING

=== CTP ===
(read.forumsplace.com)

THE FAR SIDE® GALLERY 2

by Gary Larson

timewarner
paperbacks

On The Far Side

Wanna hear my definition of a Golden Age as applies to x?

No?

Okay, here it is anyway: A Golden Age is a time when so many things about x are wonderful and unique that x itself is taken for granted.

And you can quote me, honeychile.

Take the art of cartooning in the '80s.

I could say that the work of Gary Larson is absolutely unique, and that it will make you laugh your butt off, and that is true, but it means nothing in itself because in the '80s there are at least *two dozen* cartoonists who can make you laugh your butt off, and *all* of them are unique. We are living in the Golden Age of print cartoons, friends and neighbors, and the Q.E.D. of the postulate is that we simply take them for granted: Jim (Garfield) Davis, Charles (Charlie) Rodrigues, Charles (Peanuts) Schulz, Garry (Doonesbury) Trudeau, Berke (Bloom County) Breathed ... and those are just for starters.

Gary Larson, however, is *uniquely* unique.

You can mention other cartoonists of the surreal — Charles Addams, Gahan Wilson, Virgil Partch — but Larson is as different from all of them as they are from him.

You want me to tell you why?

I can't tell you why.

There's no way to explain humor any more than there is a way to explain horror, which is probably why a man like Larson (or Addams, or Wilson, or Rodrigues) must hear the question I often hear so many times: *Where do you get your ideas?*

My answer is Utica.

It doesn't mean anything, but I don't know the answer, and at least it shuts 'em up.

I don't know what Larson's answer is.

And it doesn't matter. Either these cartoons will do it for you or they will not, just as anchovies do it for some people and other people won't touch them — find them, in fact, so revolting that they will commit the impoliteness of wondering aloud why other people eat them.

It's just a taste you can't explain.

You can't "tell" a cartoon; if you could, cartoonists would be out of business. A cartoon isn't simply a joke; it's a talented eye combining circumstance and joke in a clearly recognizable way which cannot be duplicated. You could copy Gary Larson's pictures, just as you could copy Charles Schulz's round-headed worrywart, Charlie Brown; it's Larson's *mind* which makes him one of a kind.

Having said that you can't tell a cartoon, let me tell you my favorite Gary Larson cartoon (and I only do it because I've previewed the book which follows

and believe this cartoon isn't in it, unless it is a late add):

Two dogs are in a den. One is showing the other his trophies. One trophy is that part of the human anatomy which exists south of the wrist. "And *that* one is the hand that fed me," the dog is saying (and speaking, one somehow assumes, in the bored but privileged tones of a British *burra sahib* at the height of the Indian *raj).*

This cartoon *alone* only made me smile. But the effect of Larson's work, unlike that of many surreal cartoonists (I except only Gahan Wilson from the general rule), is *cumulative.* I found myself not looking at these circumstantial jokes as single things, isolated from one another; they seem somehow connected, and they certainly had a cumulative effect on me, as did my Larson day-by-day calendar. You start smiling; then you're grinning; then you start to giggle; then you start to laugh; then you begin to howl; finally you are lying on the floor, hoping to God you won't have a hernia or a heart attack, telling yourself to *stop,* for God's sake *stop looking at them,* but you go along just the same, because he's drawn you into a unique Larsonian world where deer talk with an oddly persuasive matter-of-factness; where Godzilla drives a Plymouth with a license plate reading I 8 NY, one arm cocked out the window, smiling grimly; where a crazed flea marches through hairs the size of Sequoias holding up a sign which reads THE END OF THE DOG IS COMING! It's all insane *but you can't stop.*

But that's good, because in the end you feel better. Why? Don't ask me. Don't say things like *catharsis* or *reductio ad absurdum* or *surrealism.* Cartooning is art, and I don't know doodly-squat about art. Like the rock song says, "I ain't no monkey, but I know what I like." And I like Gary Larson a lot, partly because he turns the world as I know it inside out like a sock, partly because he turns the world as I know it into a funhouse mirror, but mostly because he does what artists and humorists are supposed to do: he sees what I would see if I could have his eyes. I don't have them, but thank God they are on loan.

Like a chill in a dark place, good cartoons are a momentary *frisson;* they are a hit like a drug that is addicting but does no damage; does, in fact, good.

Explain him?

No.

Explicate him?

No.

Enjoy him?

Yes.

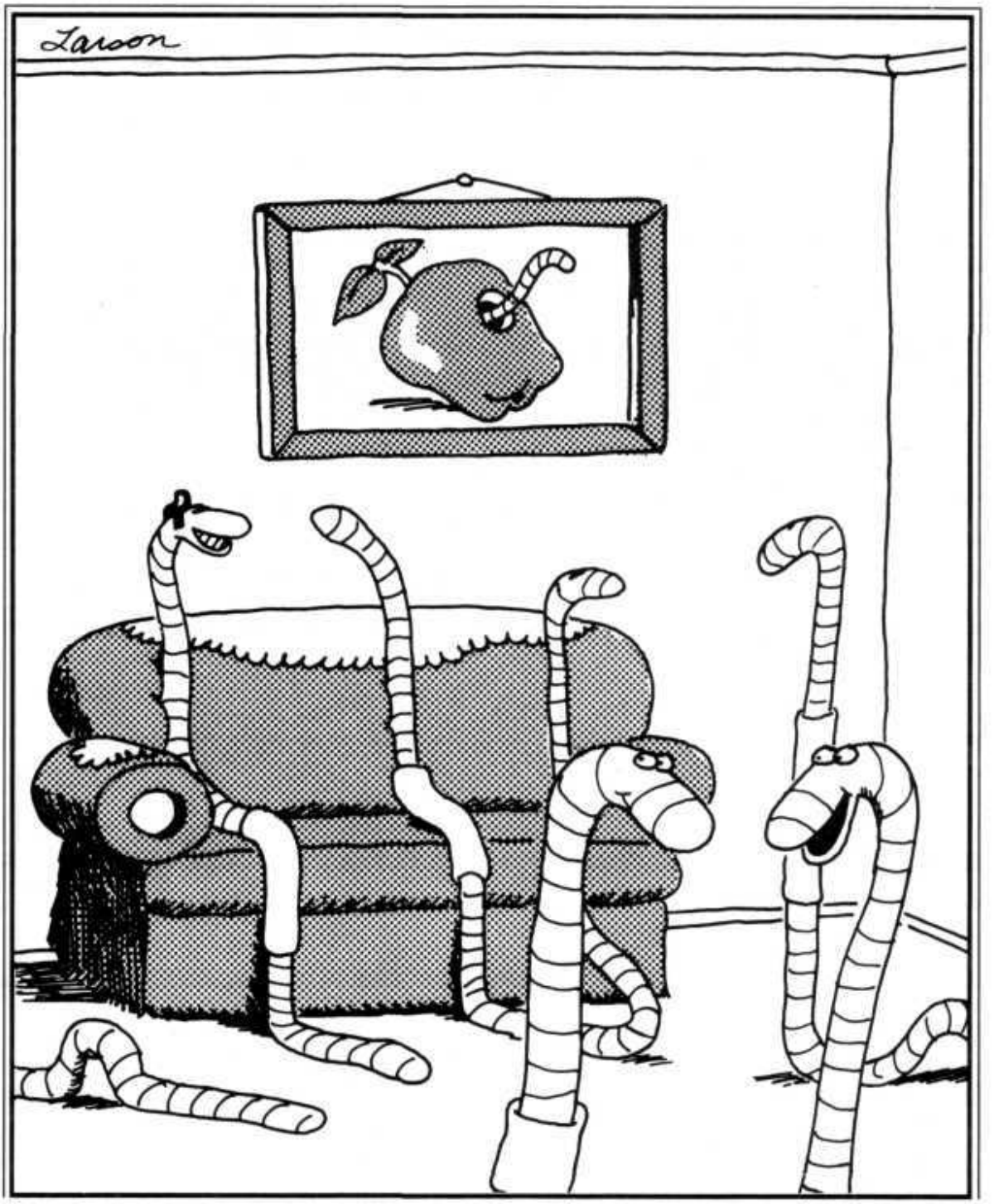
God, yes.

Forget the anchovies on your pizza; if you can dig anchovies of the *mind,* you're gonna have a *blast.*

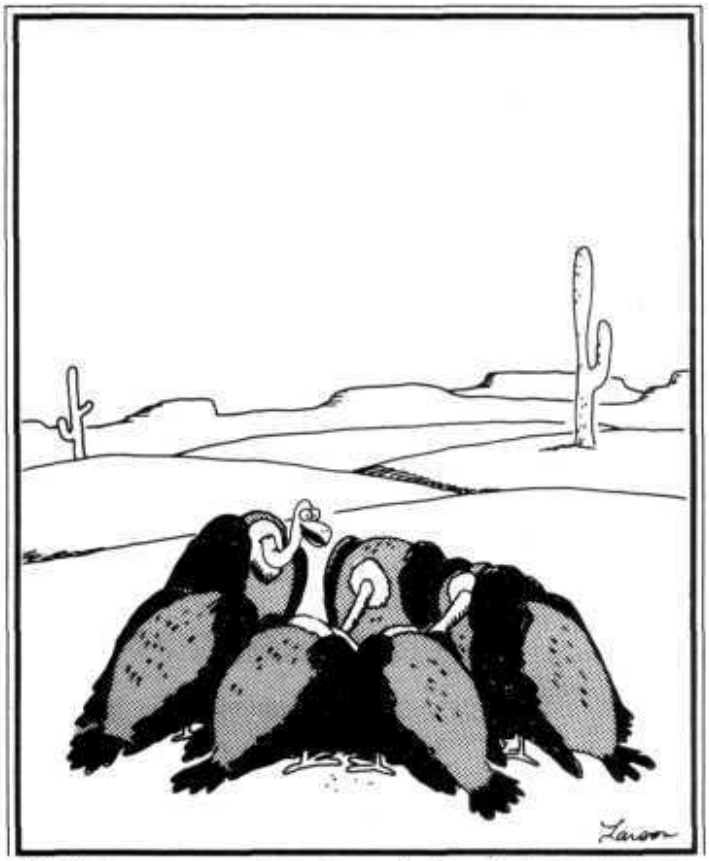
Just don't o.d.

You could die laughing.

STEPHEN KING

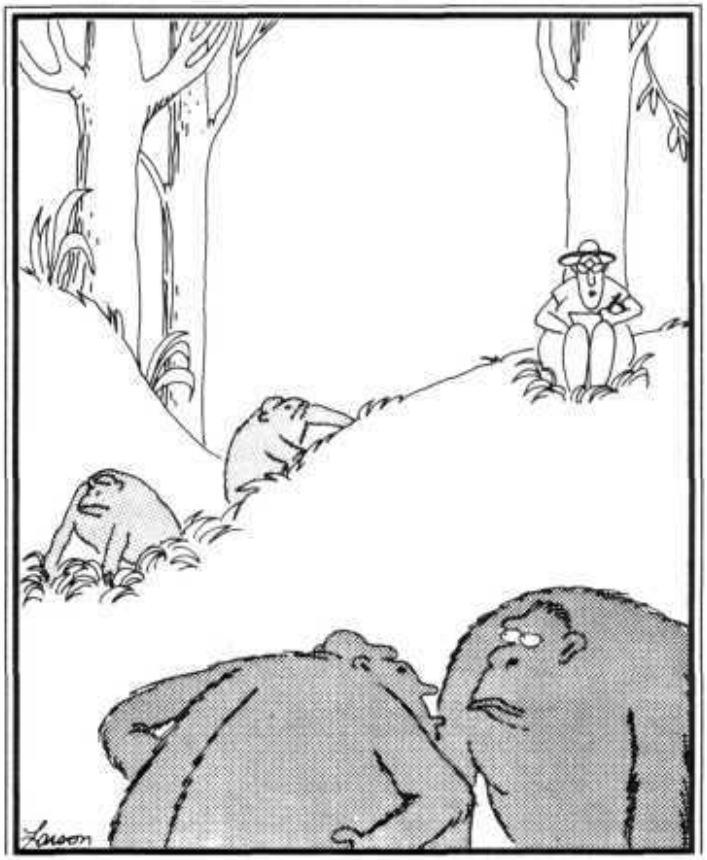


"You gotta check this out, Stuart. Vinnie's over on the couch putting the moves on Zelda Schwartz—but he's talkin' to the wrong end."

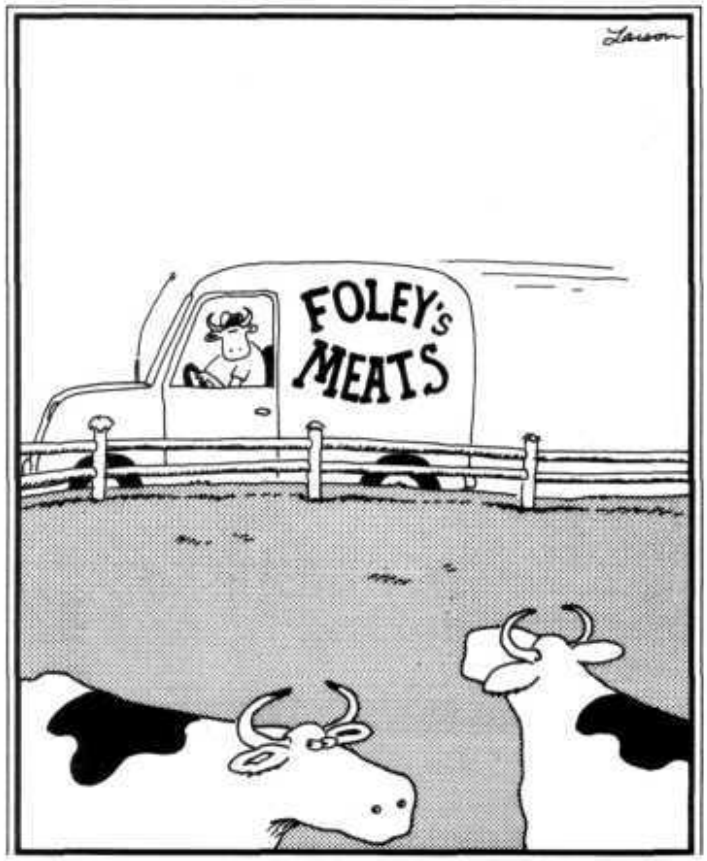


"Well, I suppose you're all wondering why I've asked you here today. ... Ha! I've always wanted to say that."

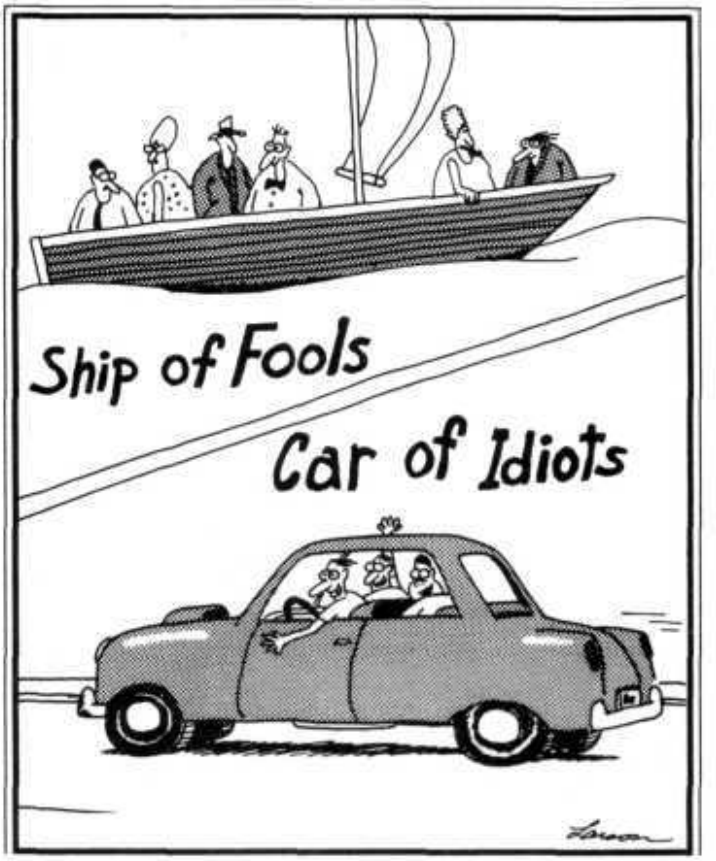
"Gad, it gives me the creeps when he does that. I swear that goldfish is possessed or something."

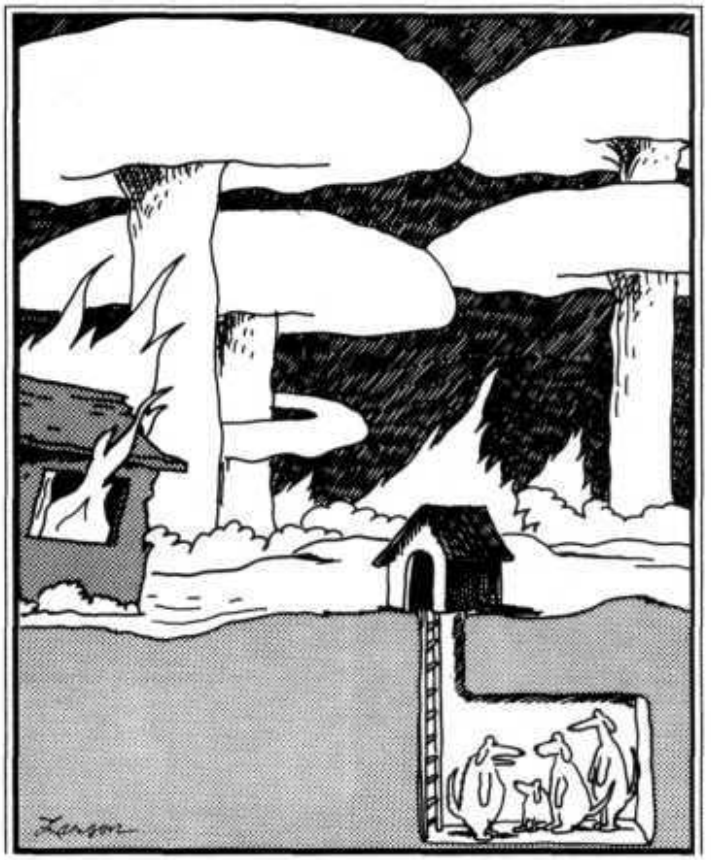


"Don't shush me—and I don't care if she IS writing in her little notebook; just tell me where you were last night!"



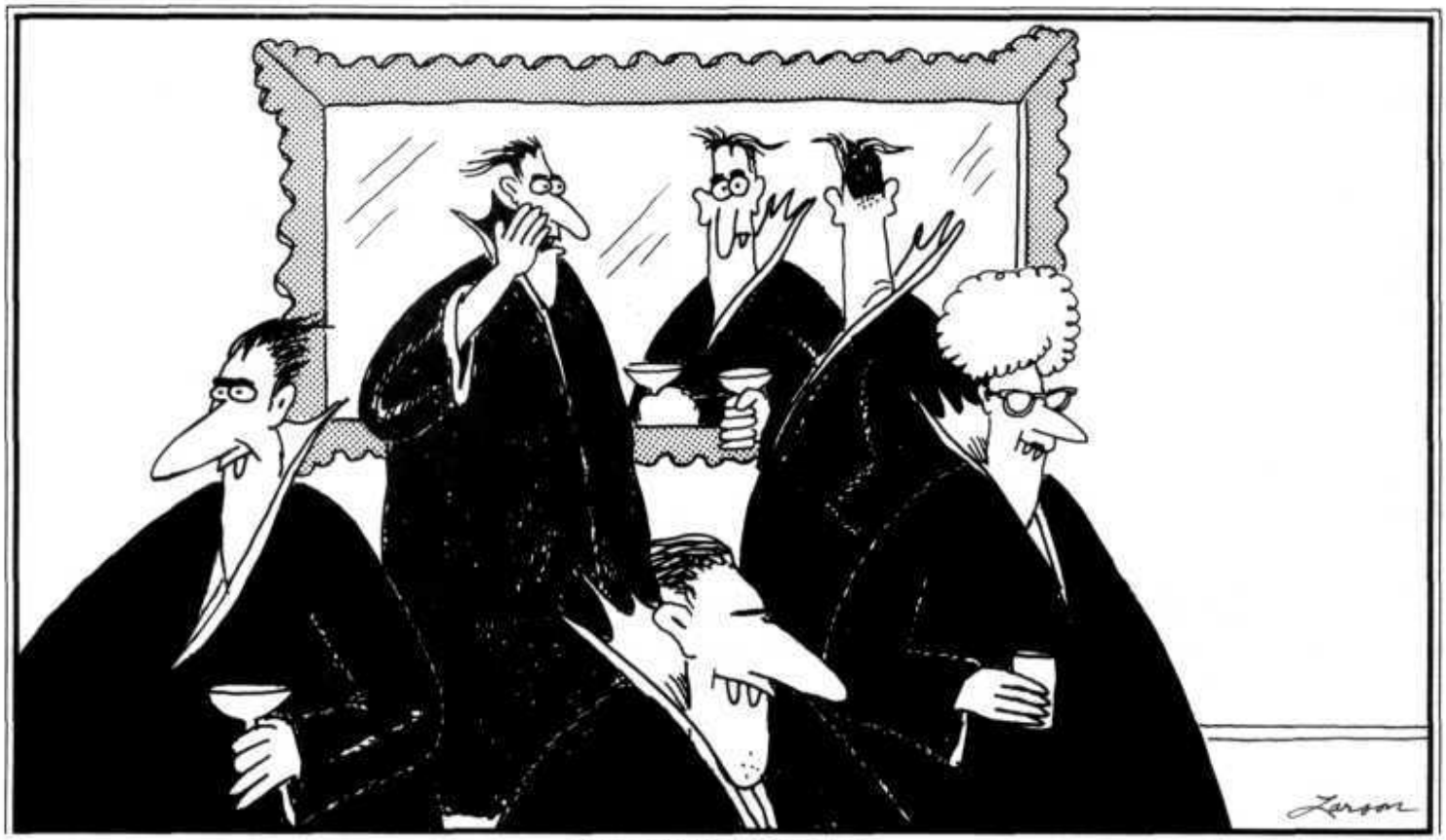
Eventually, Murray took the job—but his friends never did speak to him again.



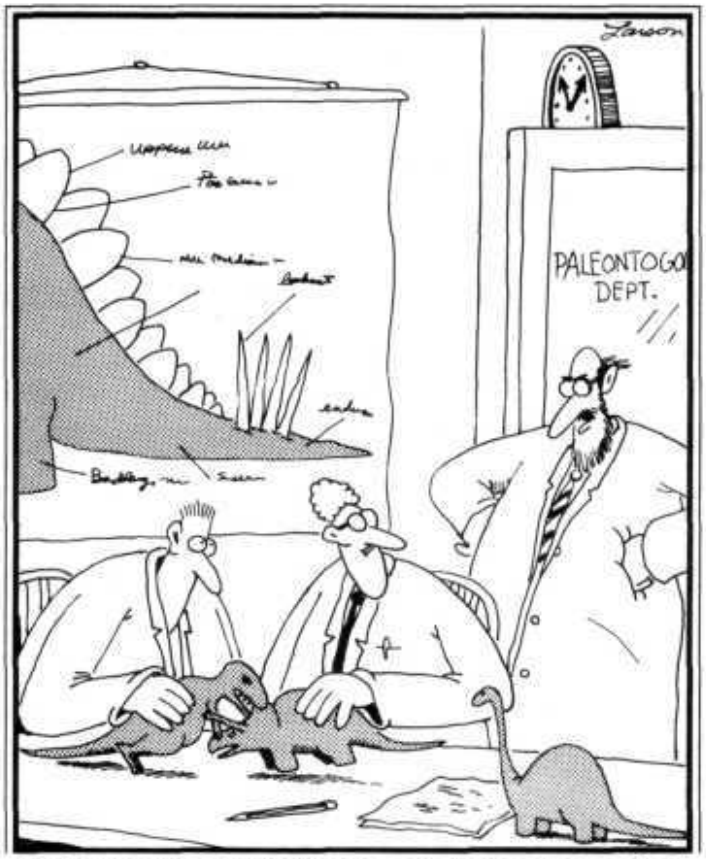


"Well, we must face a new reality. No more carefree days of chasing squirrels, running through the park, or howling at the moon. On the other hand, no more 'Fetch the stick, boy, fetch the stick.'"

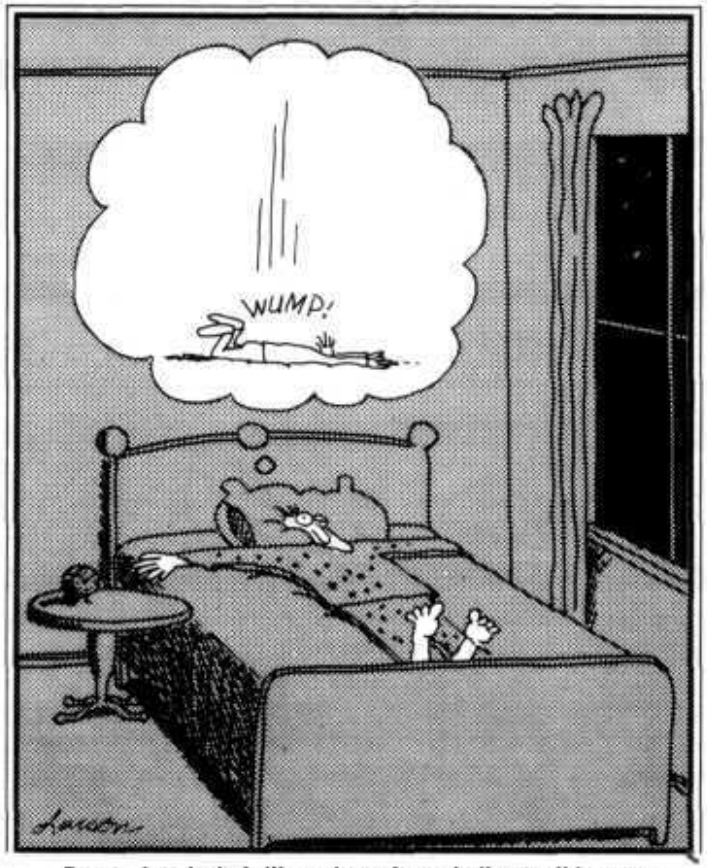
"Here, Fifi! C'mon! ... Faster, Fifi!"



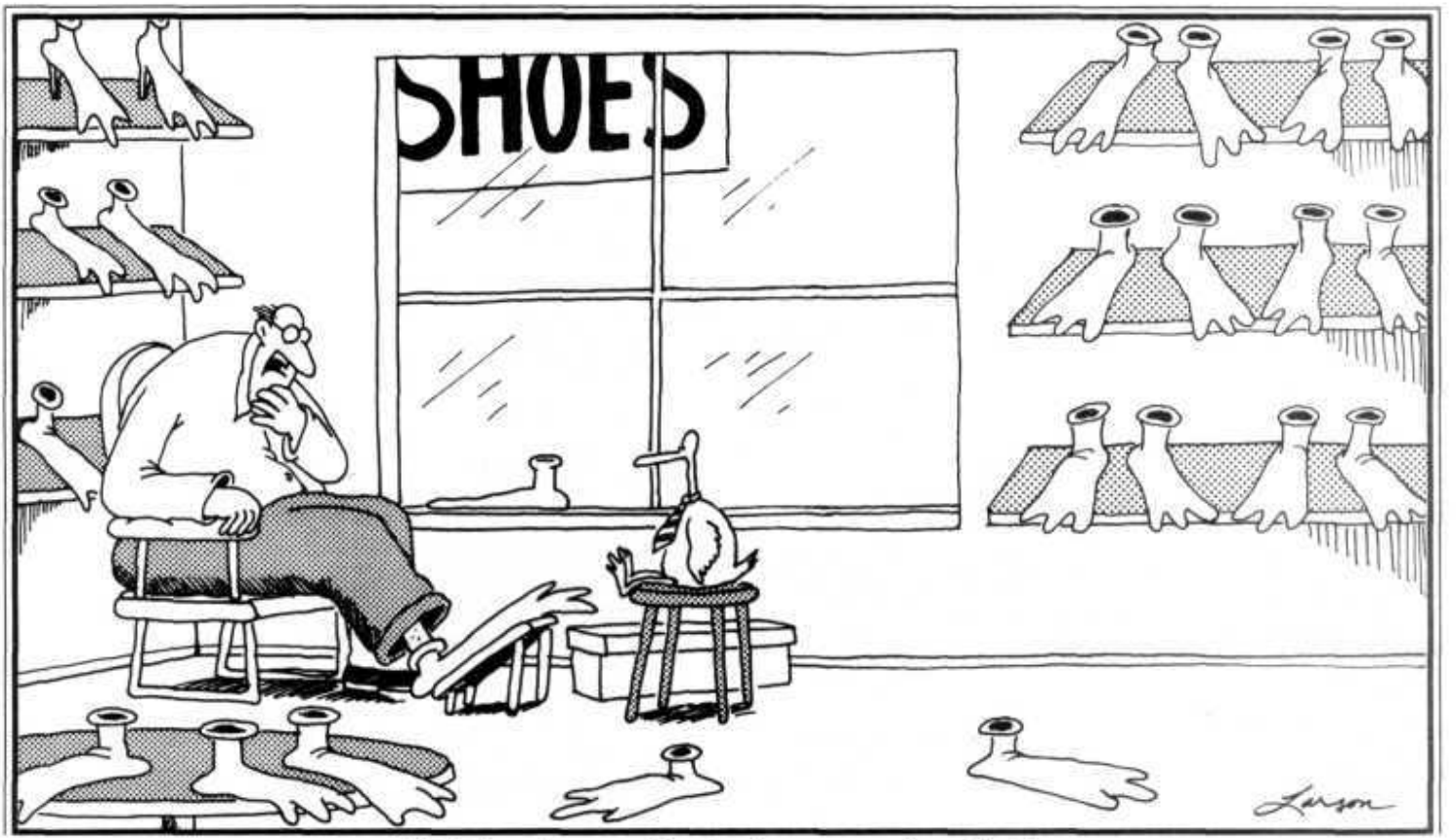
"Hank! You're reflecting!"



"Cummings! Schneider! You've got plenty of research to work on ... and for the last time stop making those plastic models fight."



Dreaming he's falling, Jerry forgets the well-known "always-wake-up-before-you-land" rule.

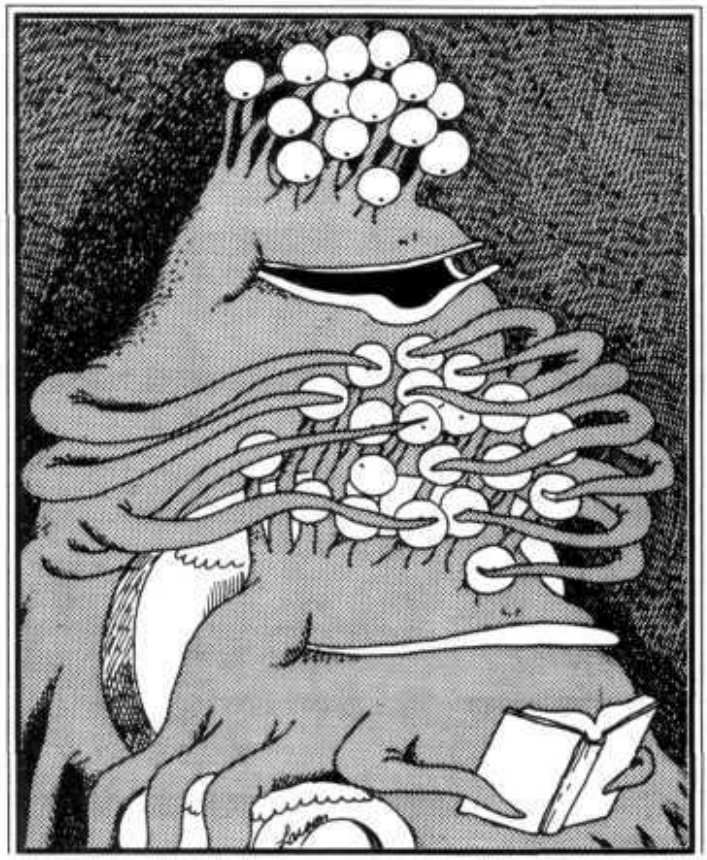


"Well, I'm not sure. ... You don't carry any other styles?"

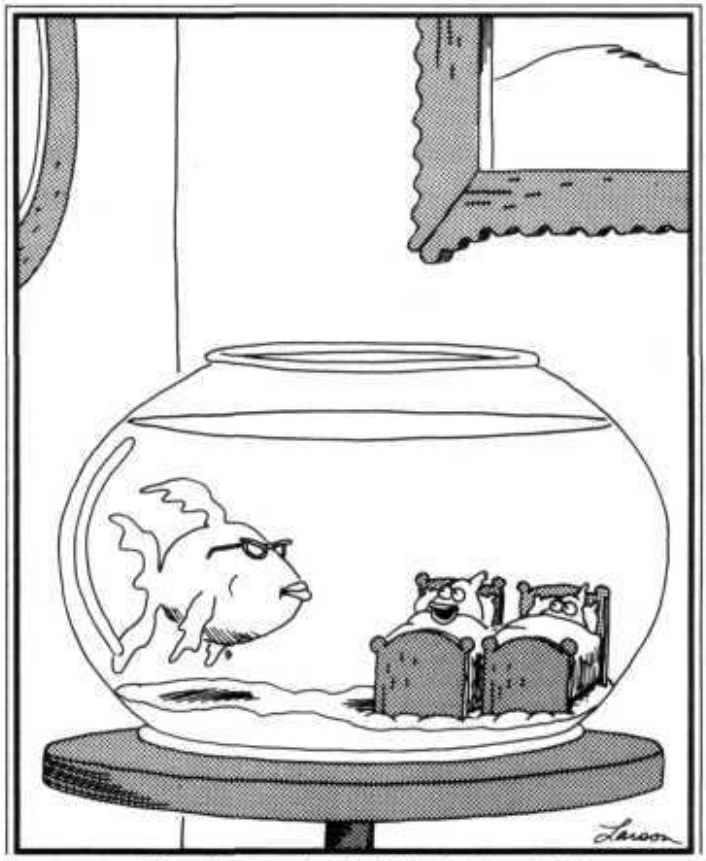
"You idiot! I said get the room freshener! That's the insecticide!"

When careers and allergies collide

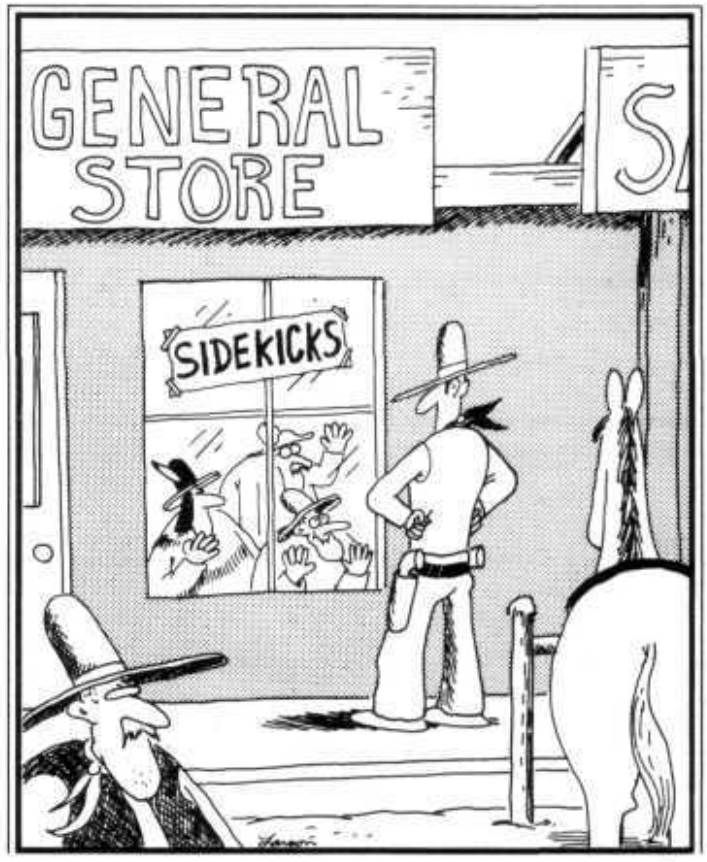
How vampires have accidents

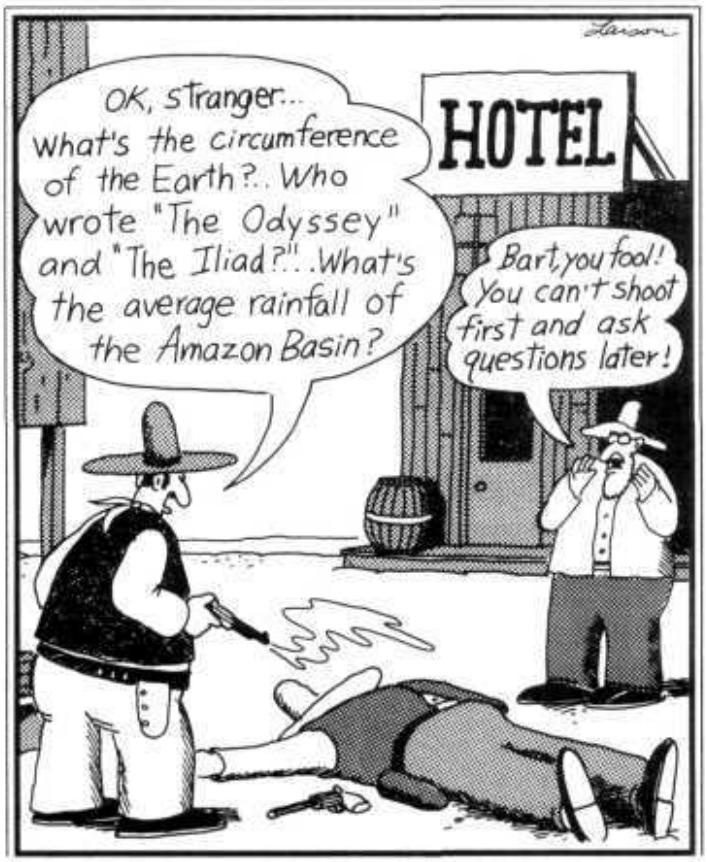


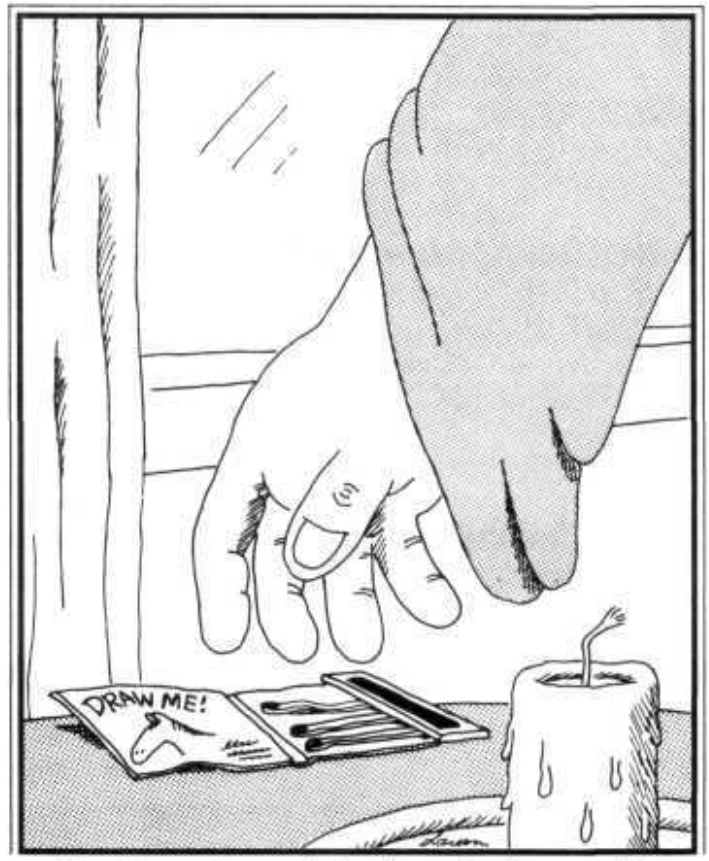
"Guess who!"



"Mom! Theron's dried his bed again."



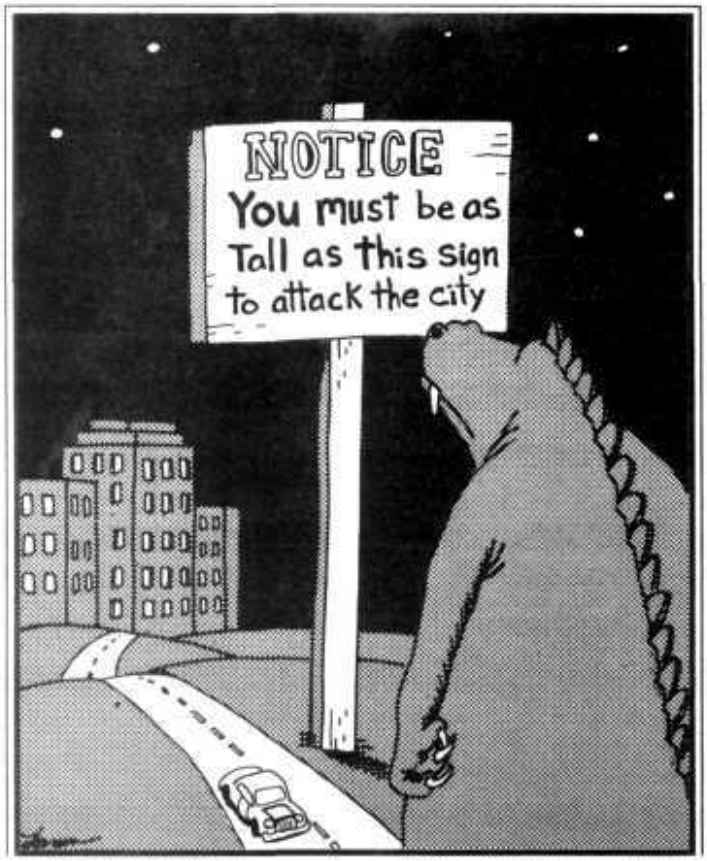

OK, stranger... What's the circumference of the Earth?.. Who wrote "The Odyssey" and "The Iliad?"..What's the average rainfall of the Amazon Basin?
HOTEL
Bart, you fool! You can't shoot first and ask questions later!

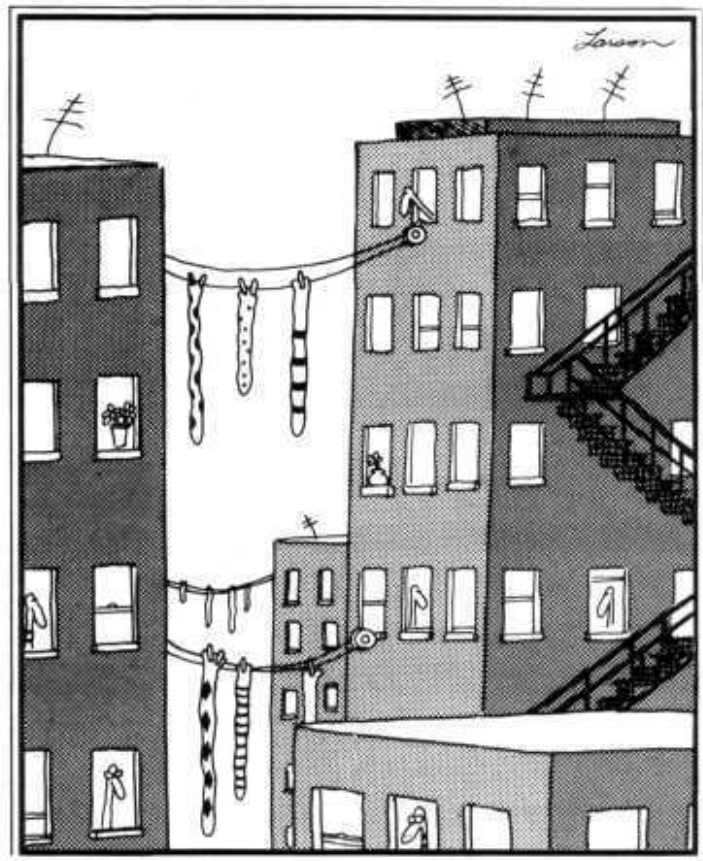


One day, as he nonchalantly reaches for a match, Leonardo da Vinci's life is suddenly transformed.

Danny shows off his sheep's brain.

This time I just took the tooth under the pillow, Billy - but next time I'm bringing the PLIERS!! BEWARE, BILLY! Hahahahaha! Tooth Fairy

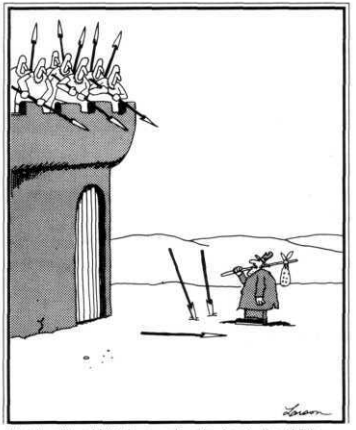




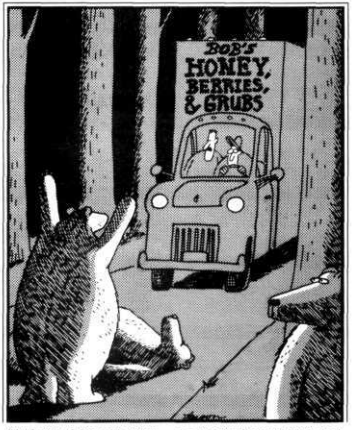
Across town in the snake district

"Me? I WAS charging on the right, when you suddenly went left, so I went left, and then you went right again, you idiot!"

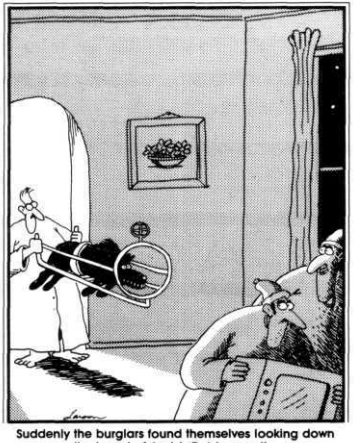
"Well, I don't think so, but I'll ask. Hey, Arlene! Anyone turn in a human brain left here yesterday? ... He says it was medium-sized, sort of pinkish."



"Hold on there! I think you misunderstood—I'm Al Tilley . . . the bum."

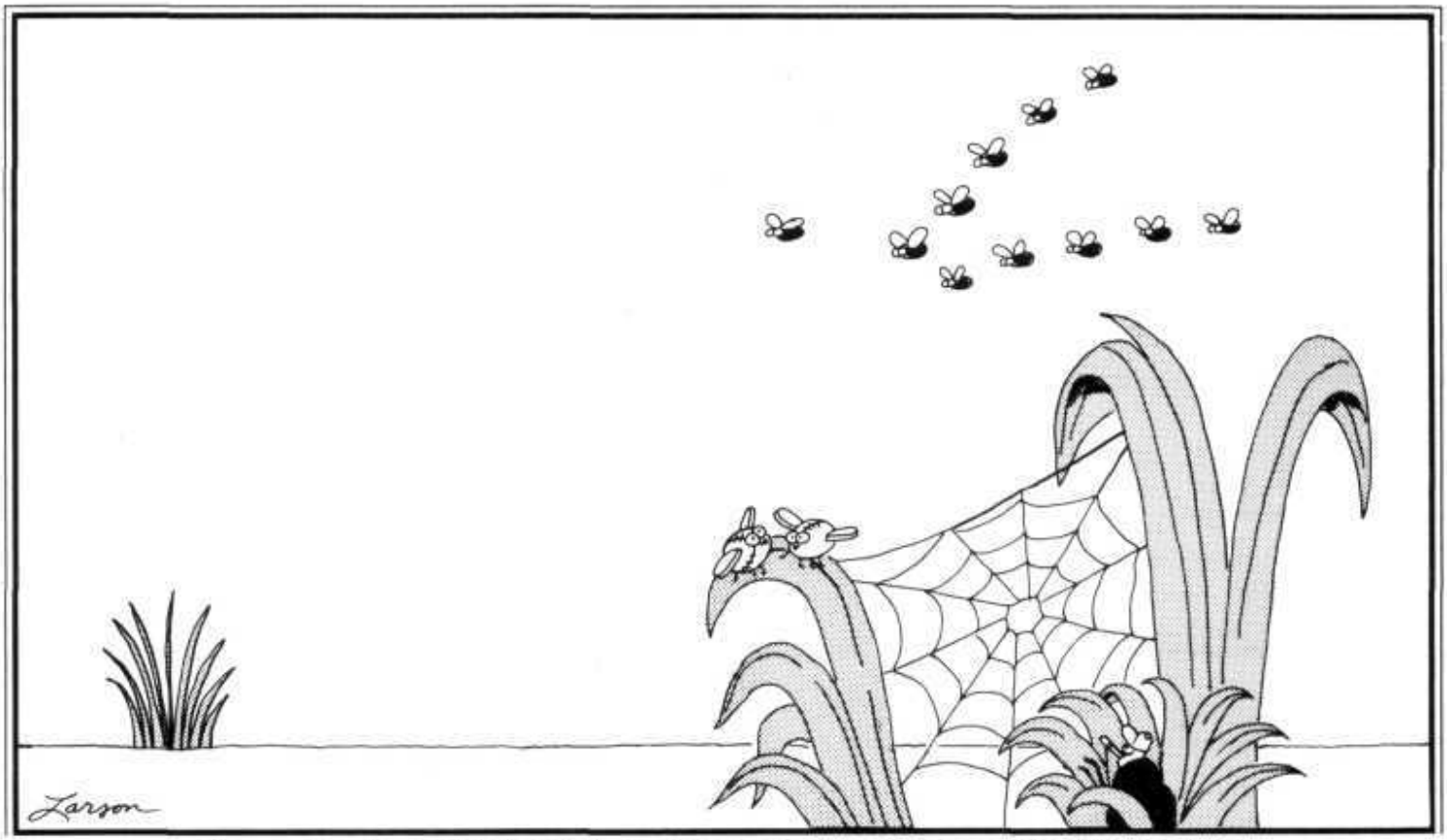


"Just stay in the cab, Vern . . . maybe that bear's hurt, and maybe he ain't."

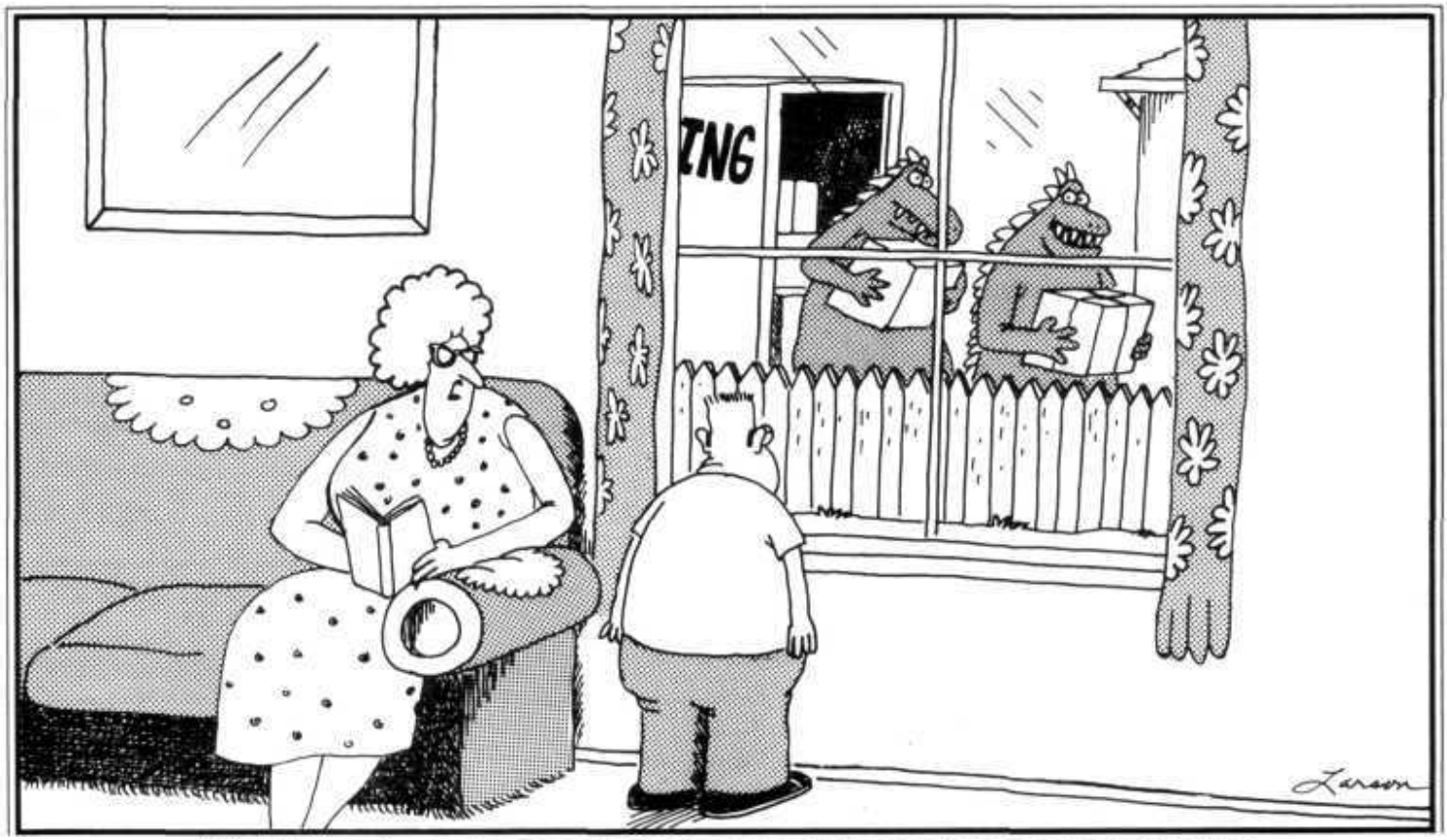


Suddenly the burglars found themselves looking down the barrel of Andy's Dobie-o-matic.

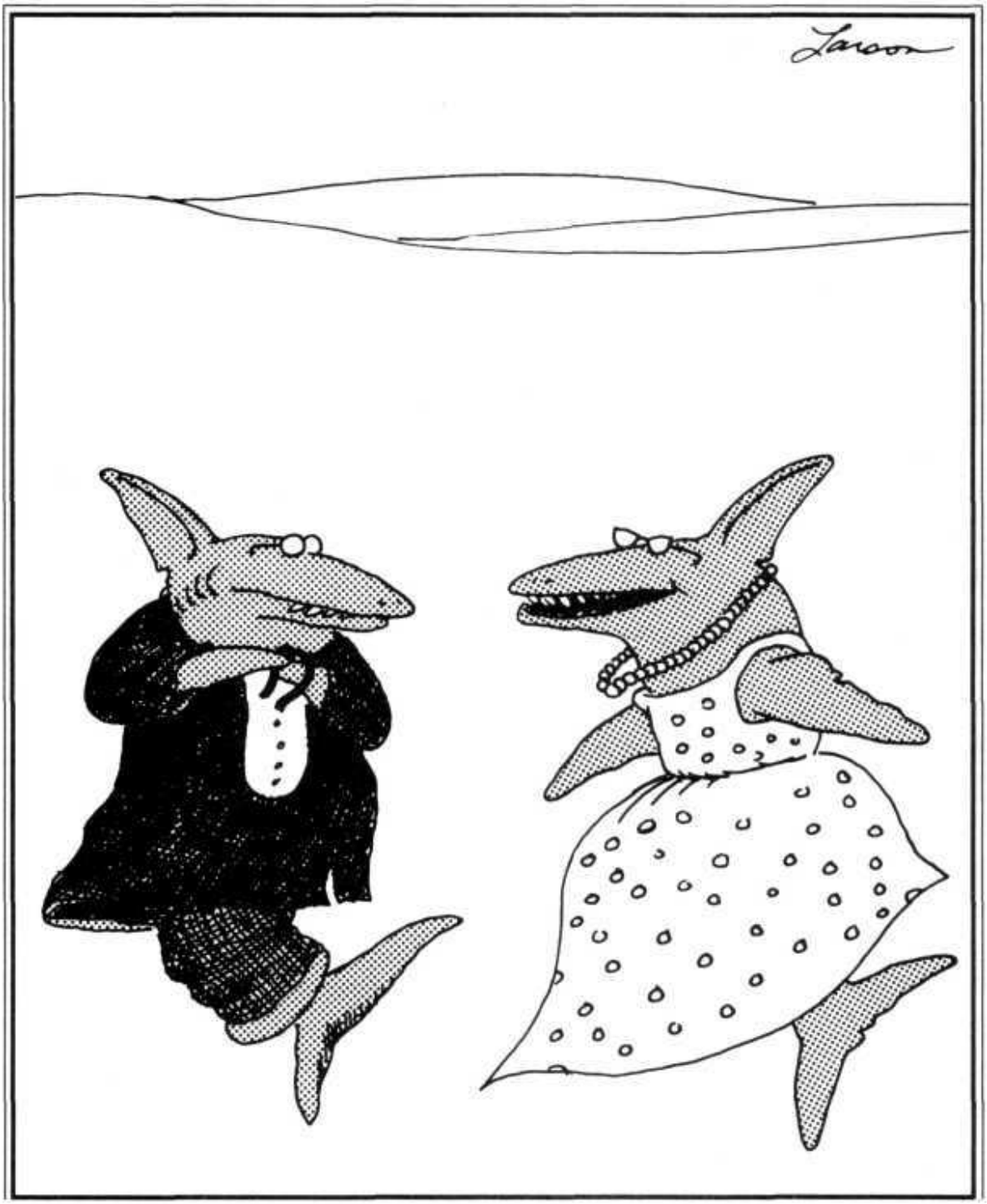
"You know those teeny tiny little birds that walk around so trustingly inside a crocodile's mouth? Well, I just been eatin' those little guys like popcorn."



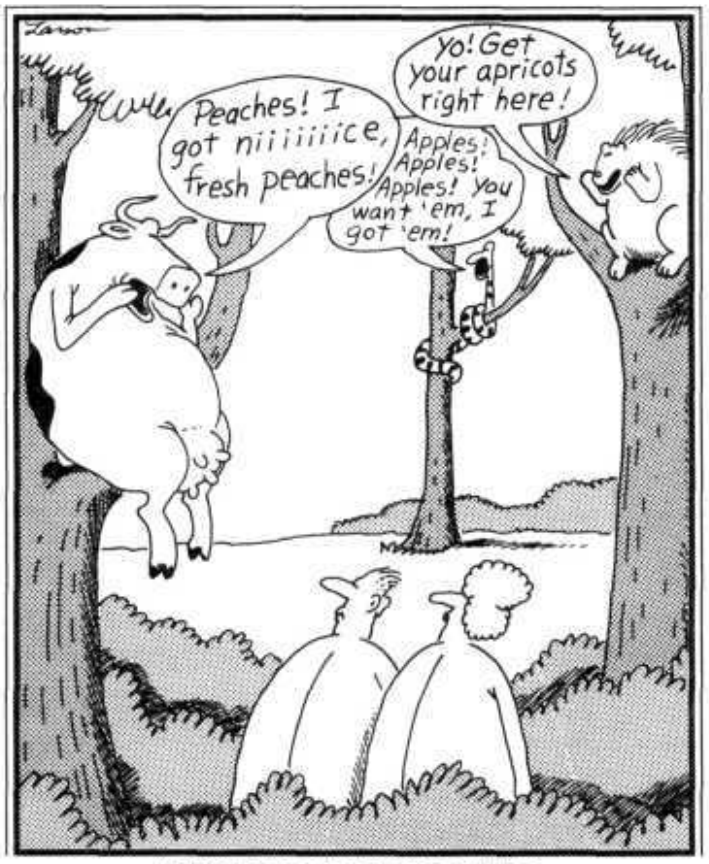
The morning dew sparkled on Bill's web. The decoys were in place, his fly call was poised, and luck was in the air.



"If there're monsters moving in next door, Danny, you just ignore them. The more you believe in them, the more they'll try to get you."



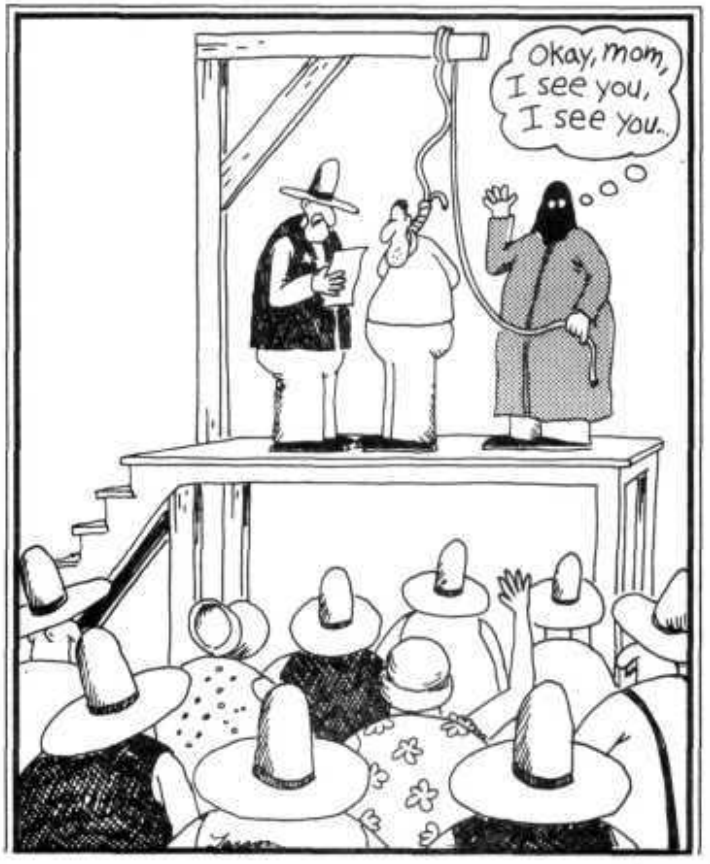
"Well, if you're almost ready, *I'm* dressed to kill."

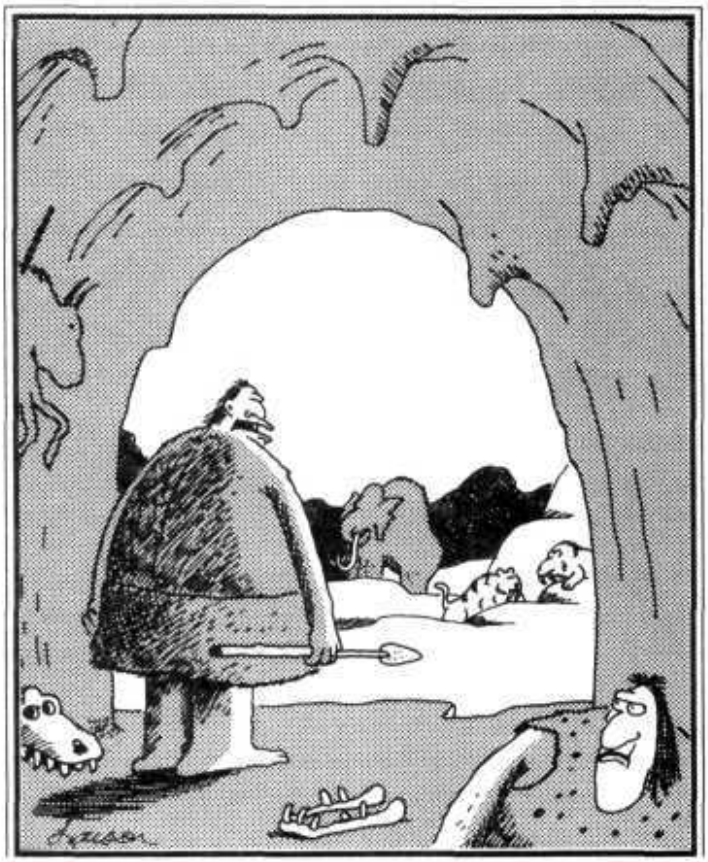


Saturday morning in the Garden

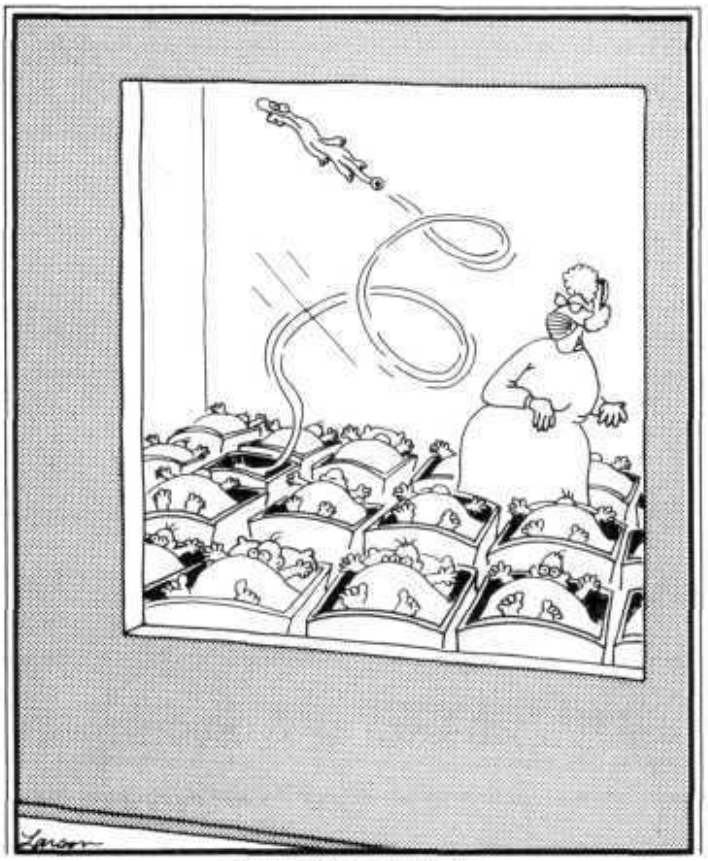
In the animal self-help section

"It's the mailman, doc. He scares me."

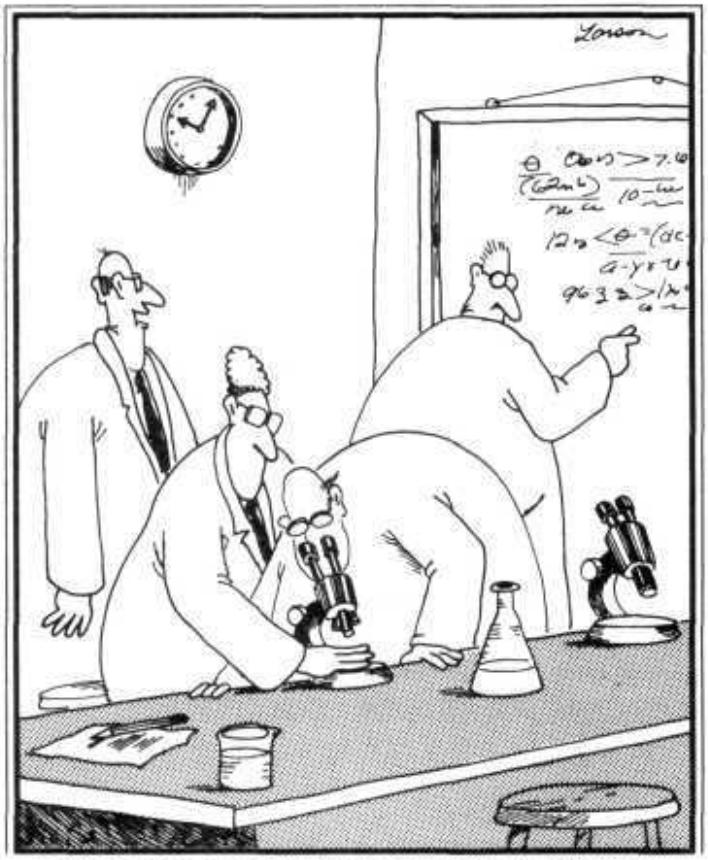




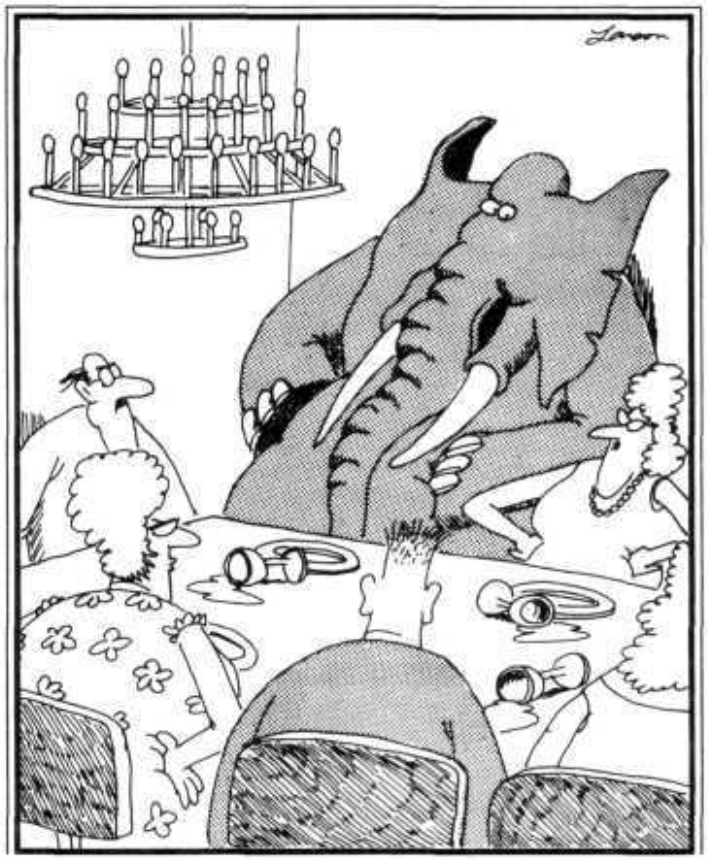
"Once in a while couldn't we just have some pasta?"



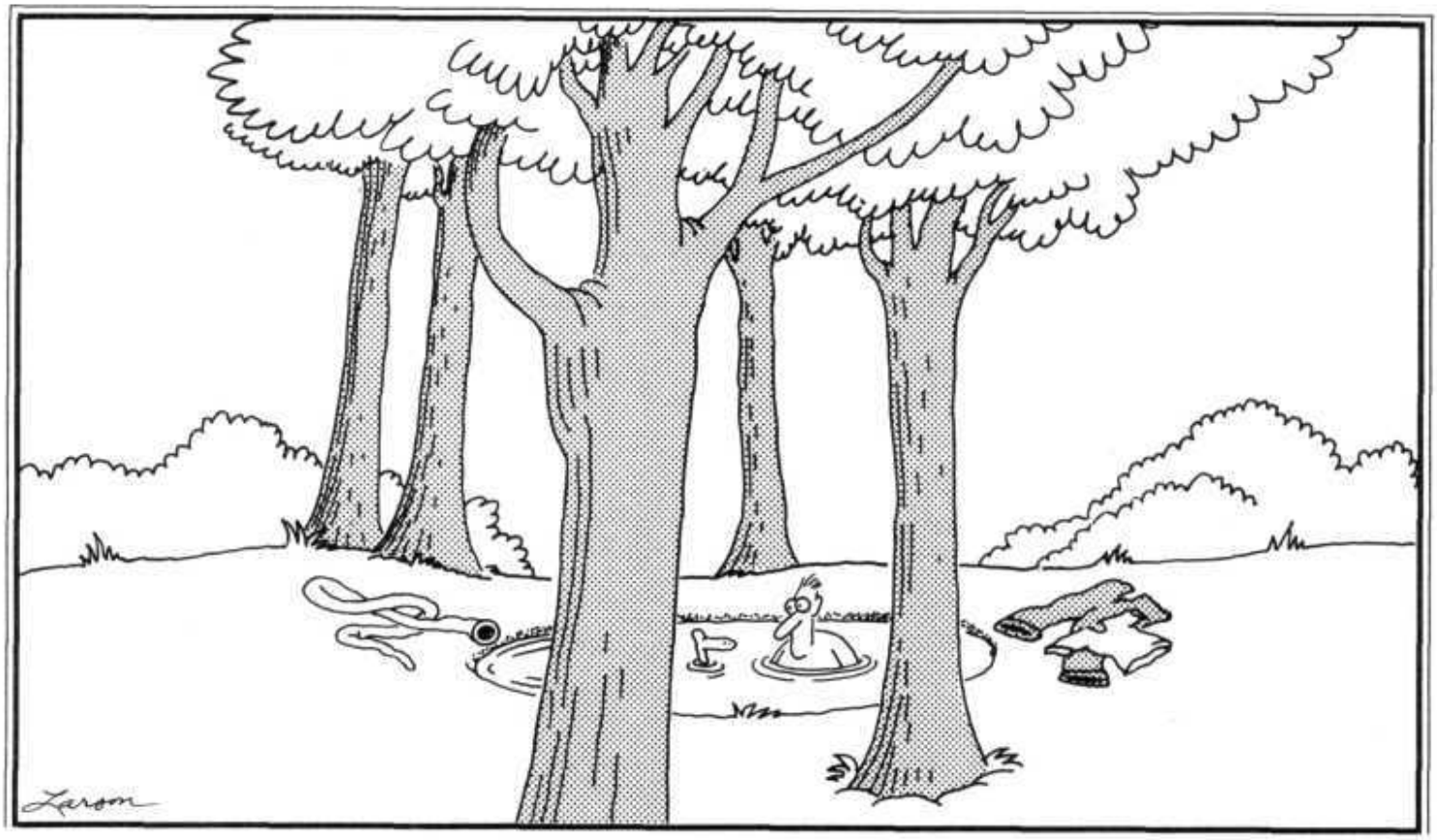
Belly button slipknots

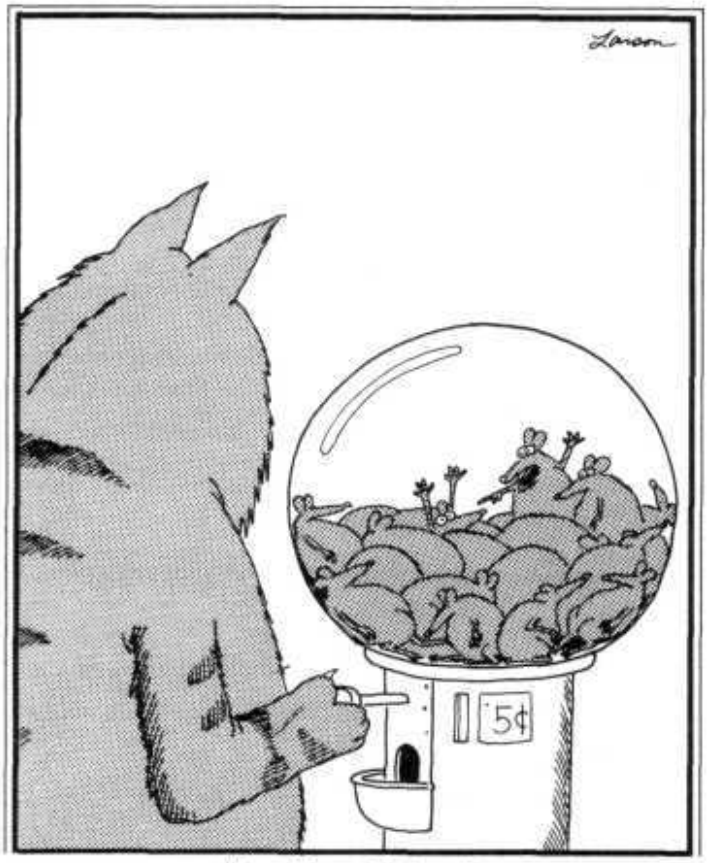


"Foster! You better get over here if you want to see Johnson's hangnail magnified 500 times."

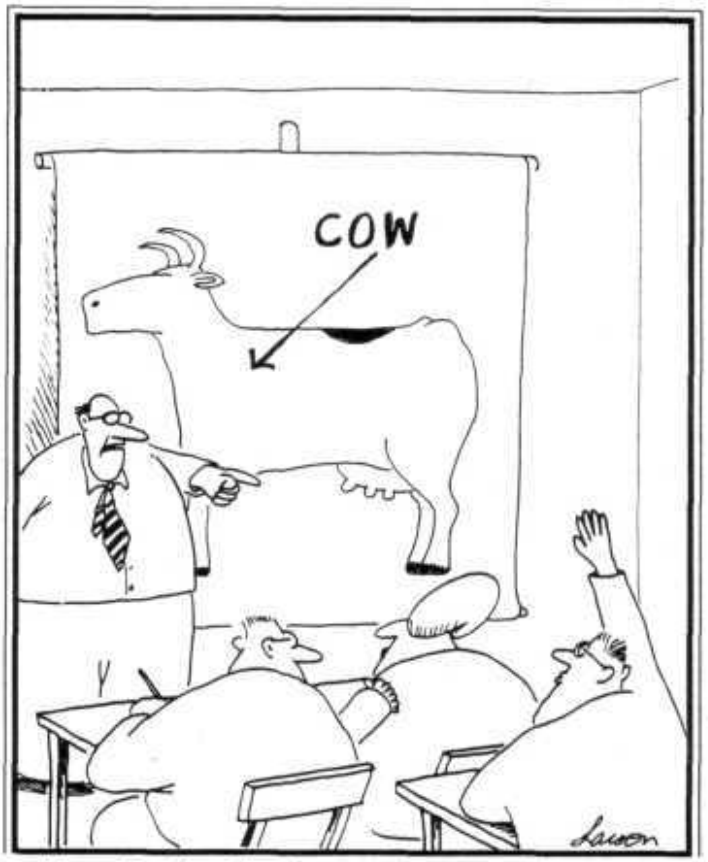


"Well, I beg your pardon. . . . But where I come from, it's considered a compliment to let fly with a good trumpeting after dinner."

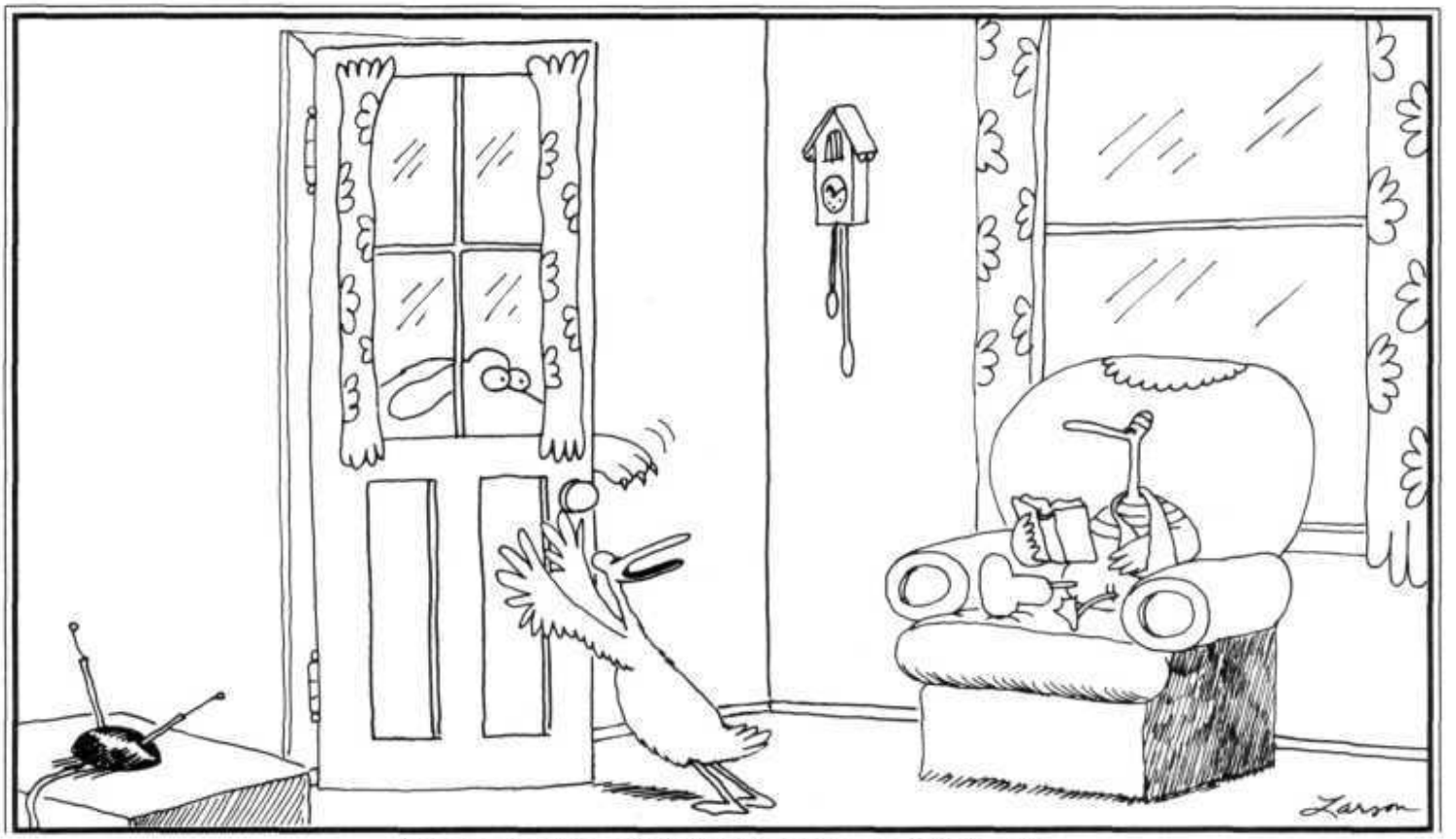




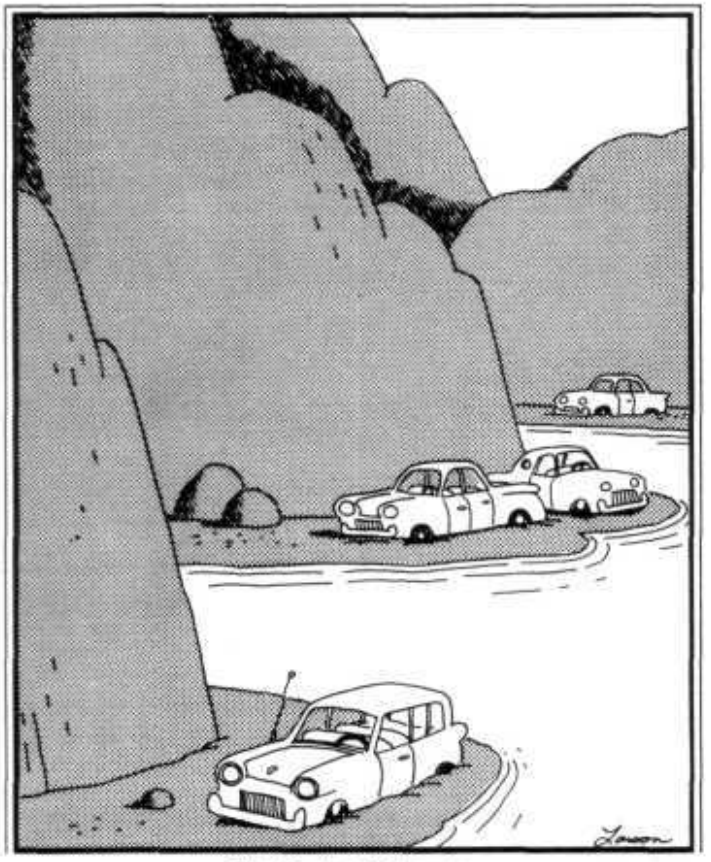
"Randy's goin' down!"



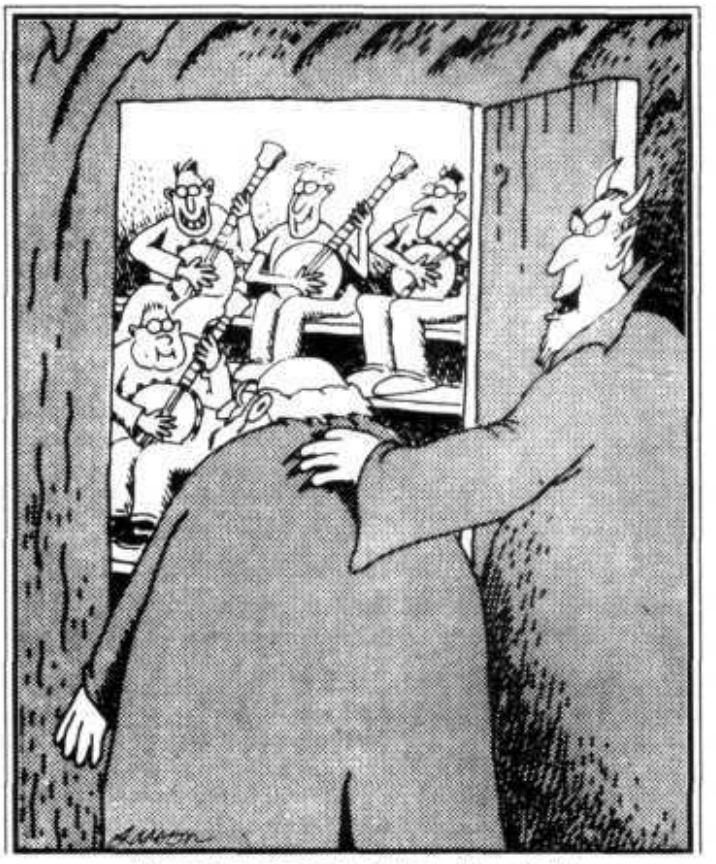
"Yes ... I believe there's a question there in the back."



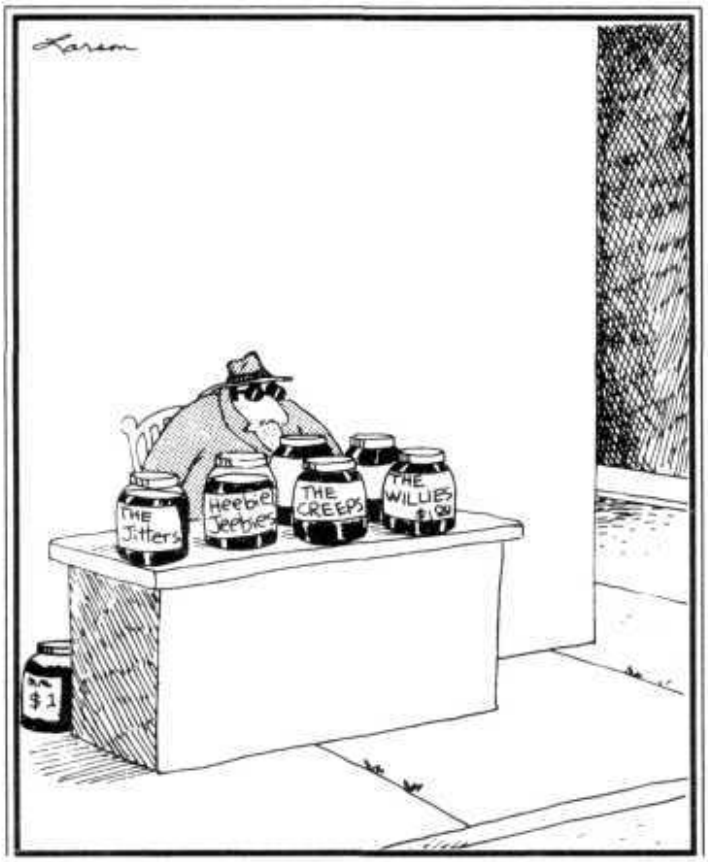
"Look out, Larry! ... That retriever has finally found you!"



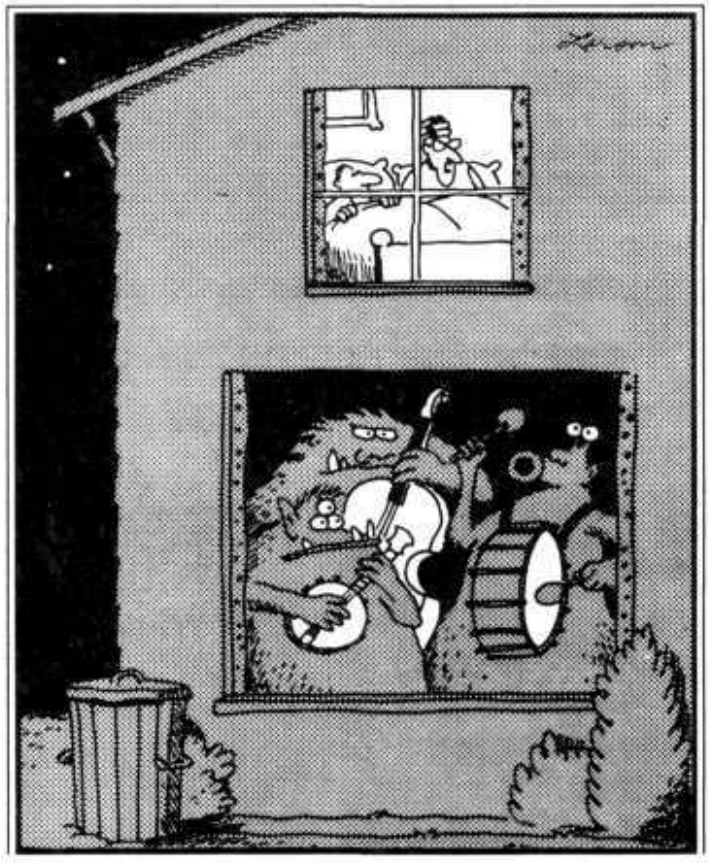
The fords of Norway



"Your room is right in here, Maestro."

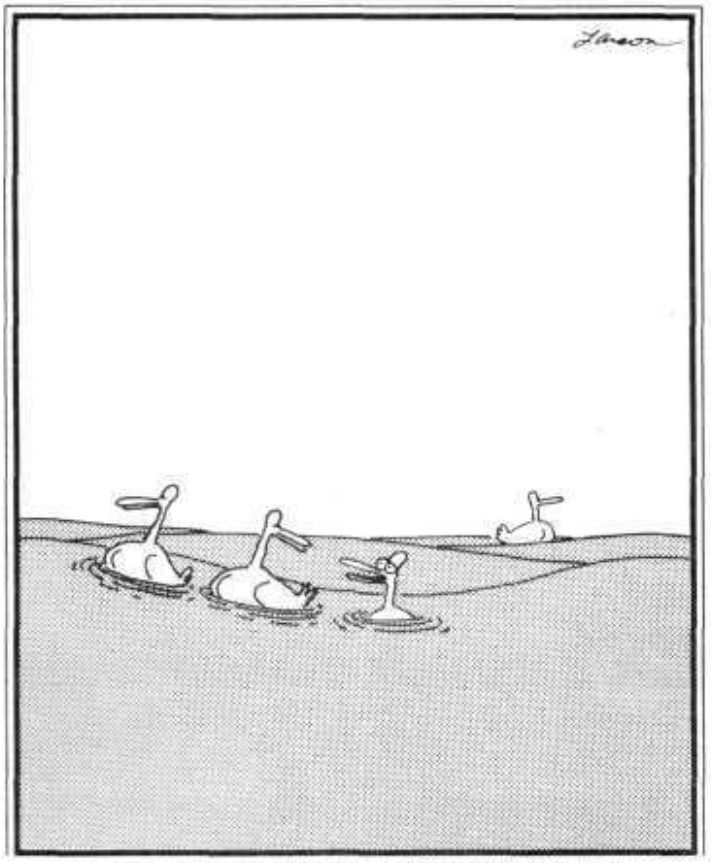


"Wendell ... I'm not content."

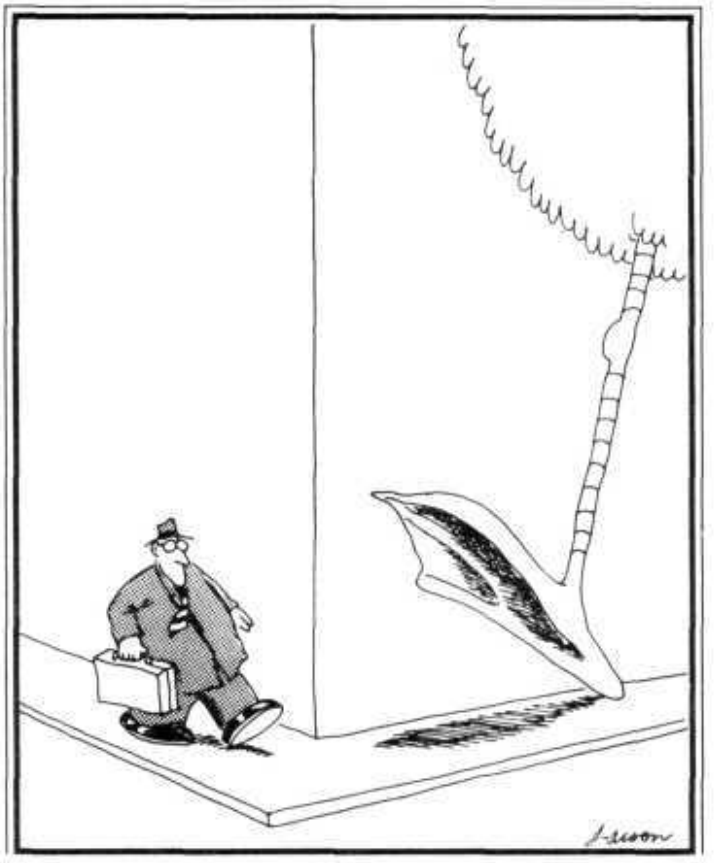


"Well, okay, Frank. ... Maybe it IS just the wind."

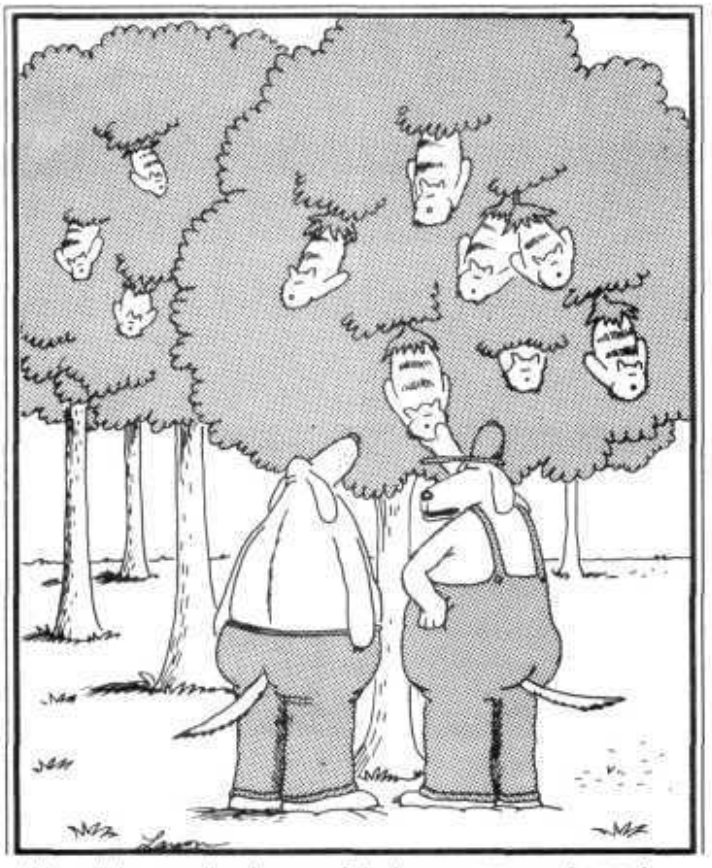
"Oh, yeah? If you're alone, then whose eye is *that*?"



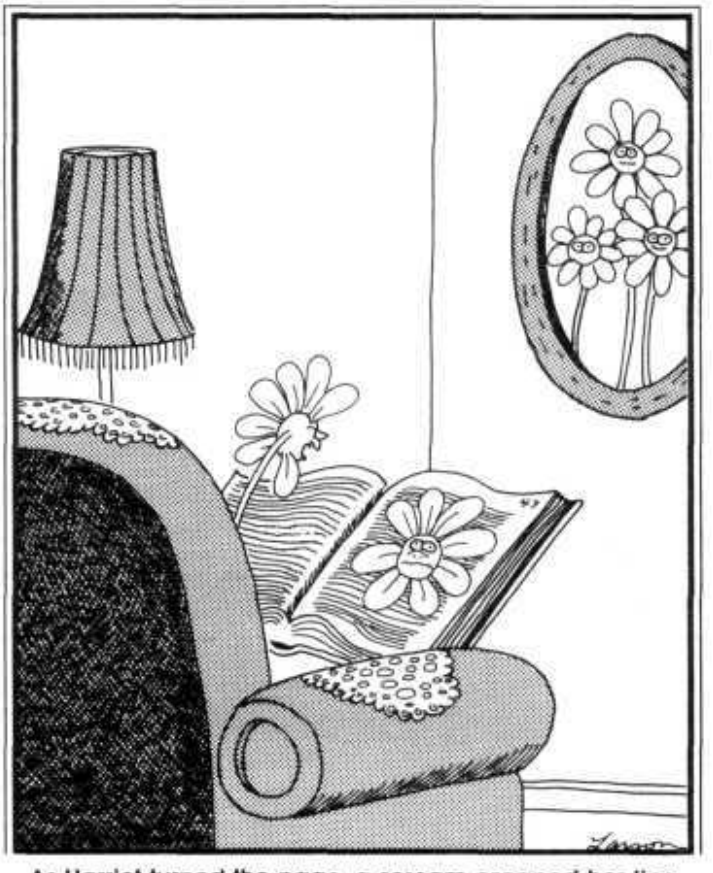
"Bob, do you think I'm sinking? Be honest."



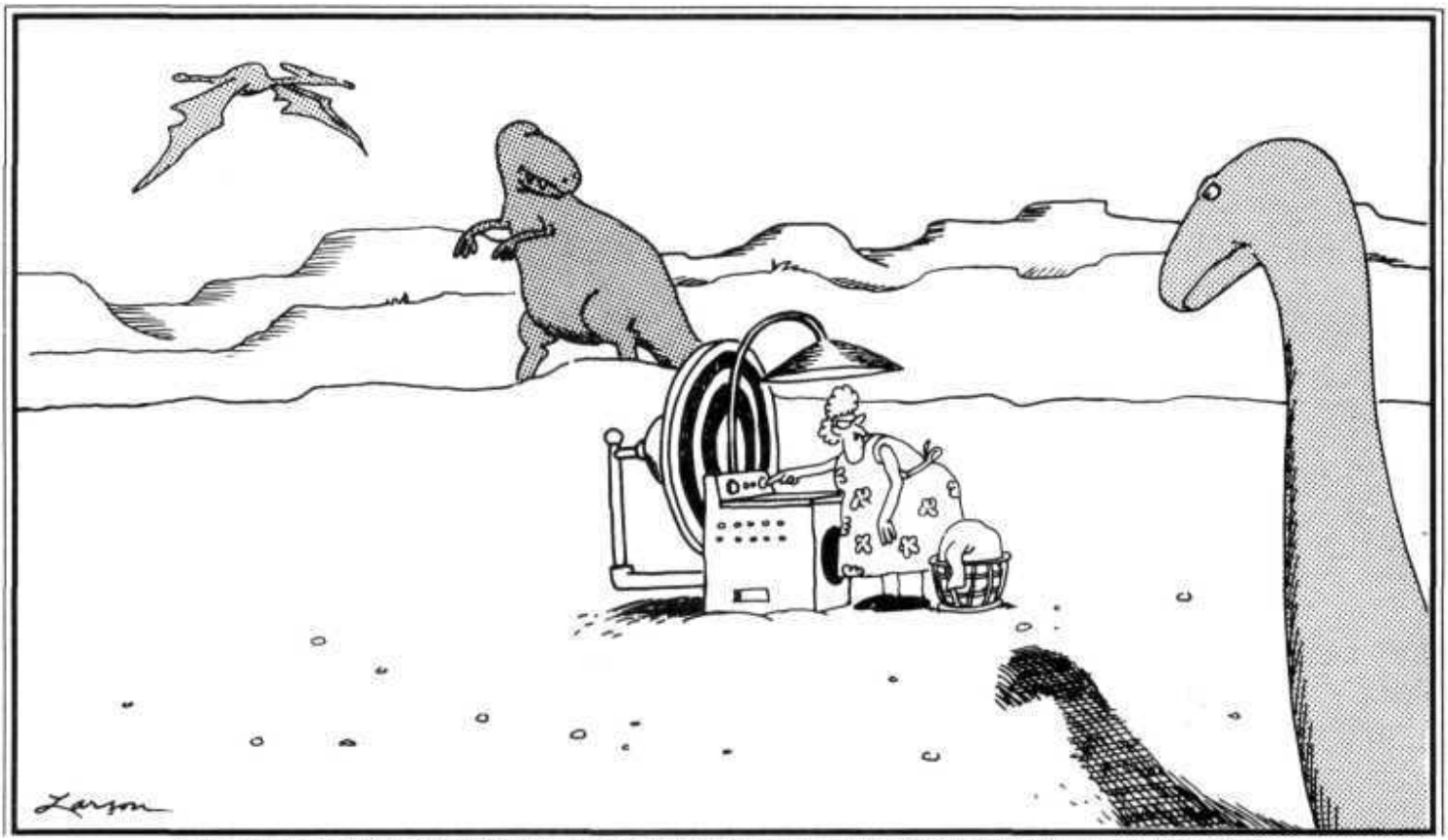
Harold would have been on his guard, but he thought the old gypsy woman was speaking figuratively.



"Yup. This year they're comin' along reeeeeeal good. ... Course, you can always lose a few to an early frost or young pups."

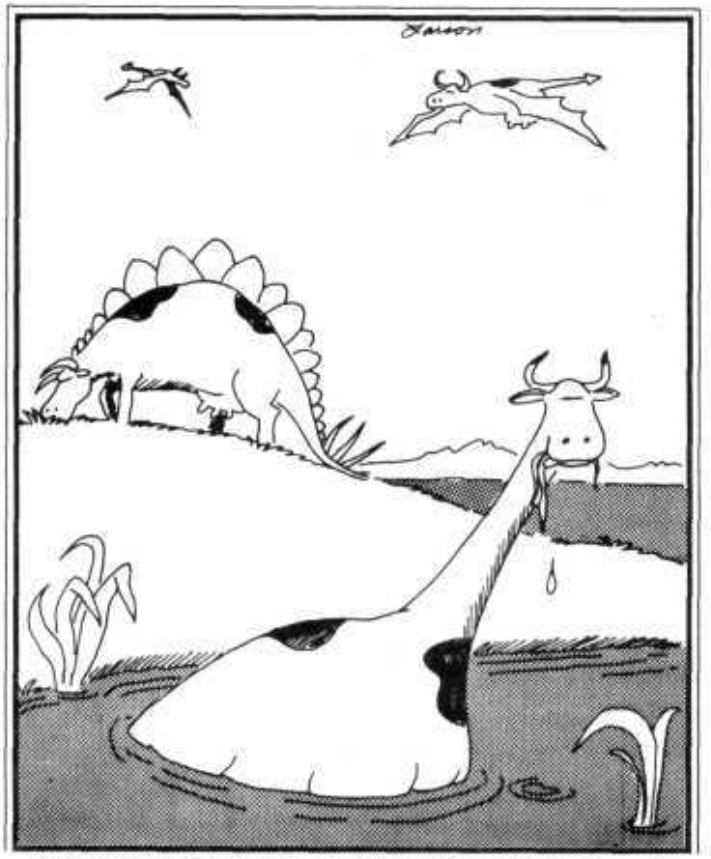


As Harriet turned the page, a scream escaped her lips: There was Donald—his strange disappearance no longer a mystery.

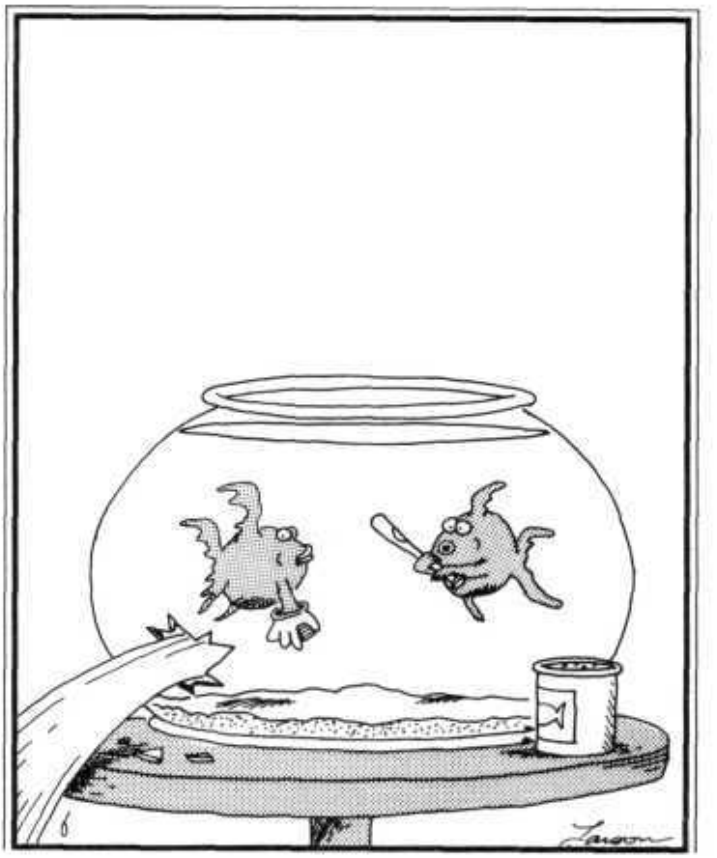


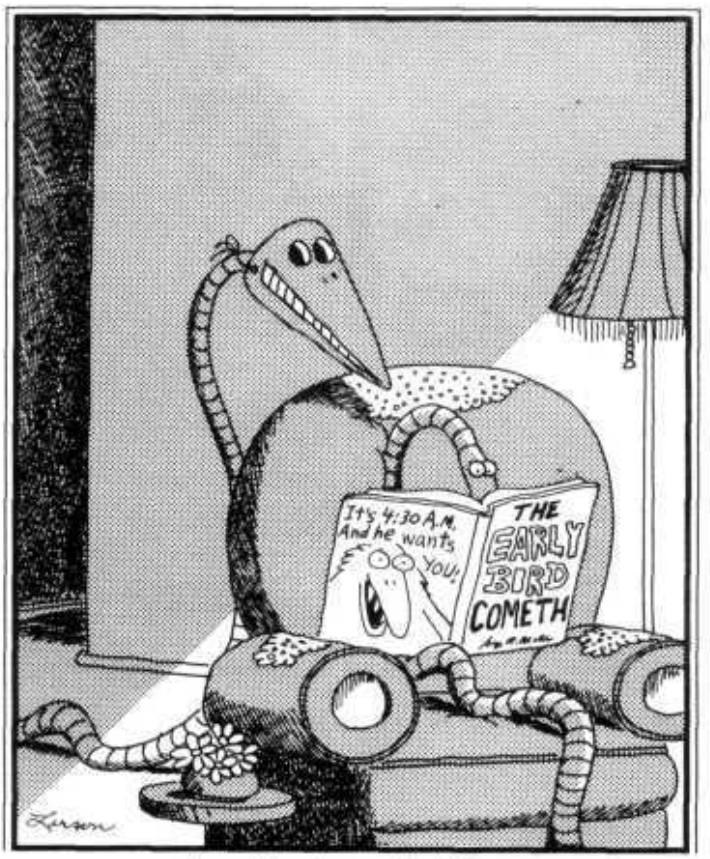
Disaster befalls Professor Schnabel's cleaning lady when she mistakes his time machine for a new dryer.

Dang! Why do I always have to sit next to some weirdo?
Larson

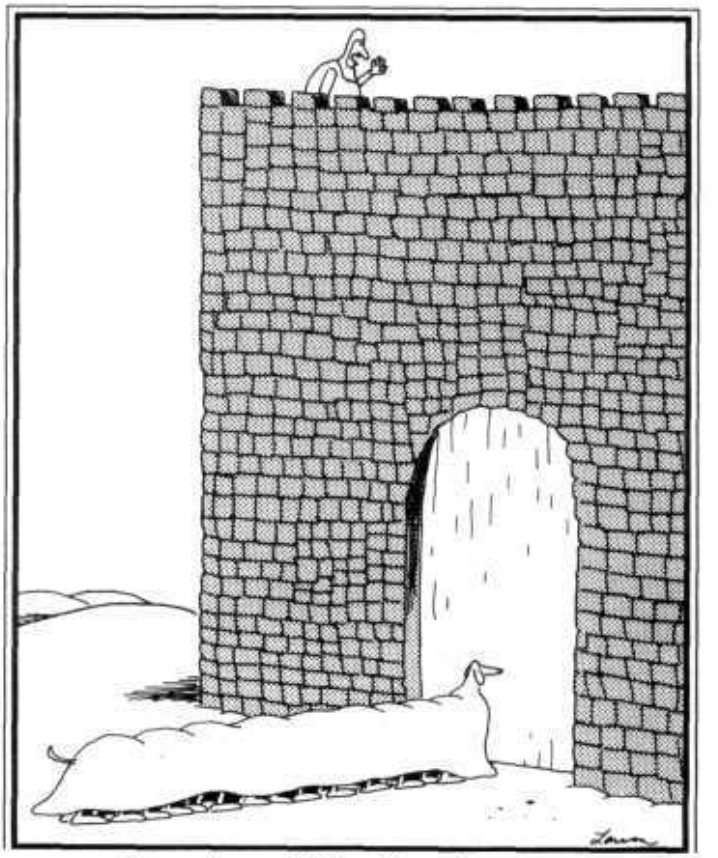


Sixty-five million years ago, when cows ruled the earth





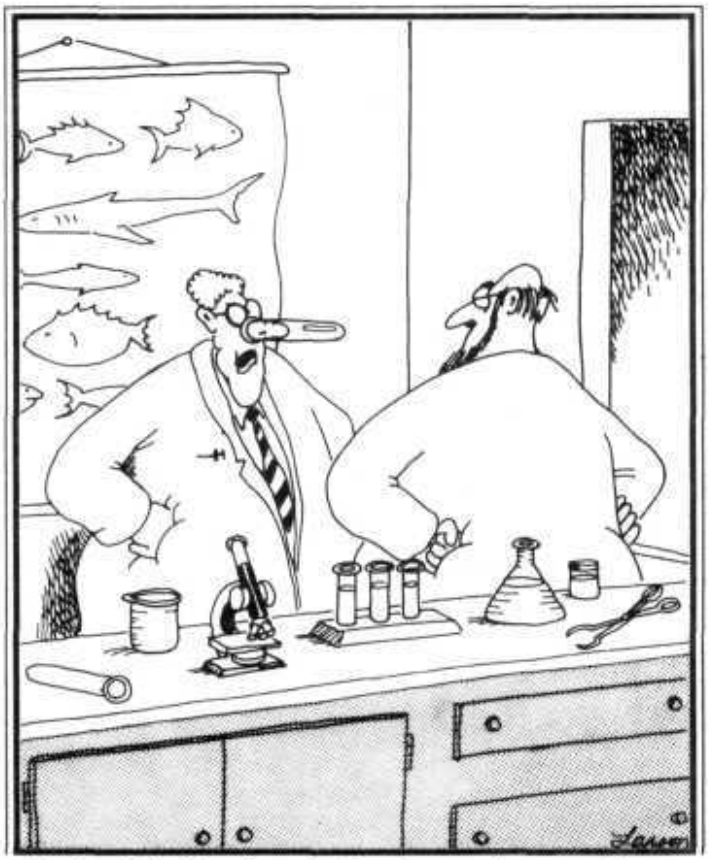
Invertebrate practical jokes



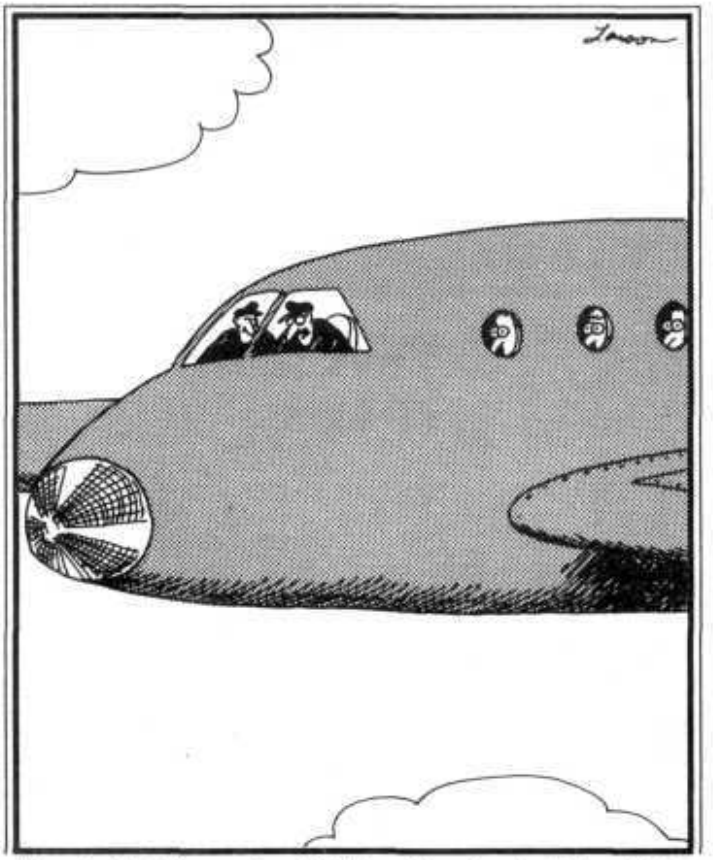
"Open the gate! It's a big weiner dog!"

"Polly wanna finger."

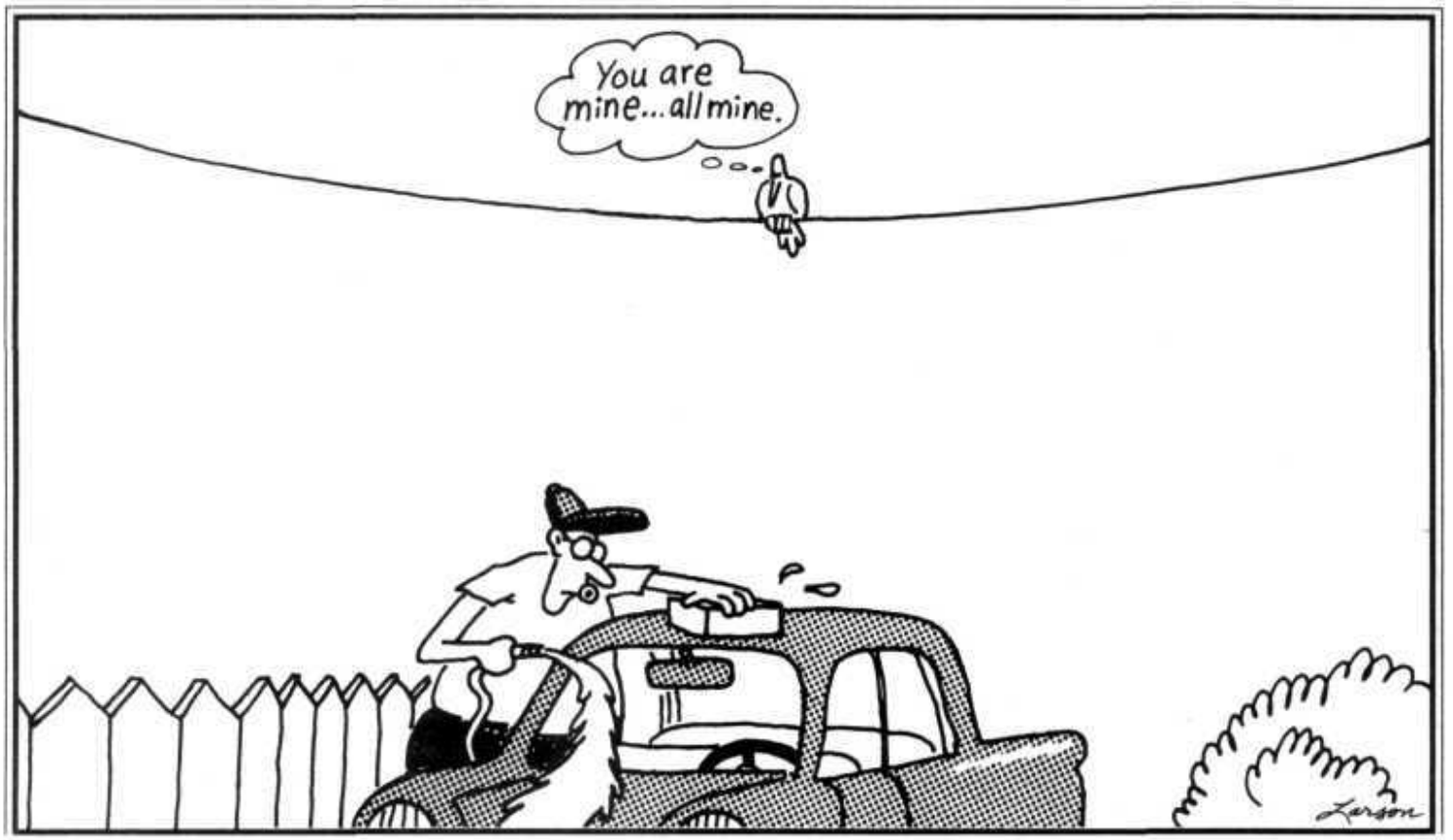
"I've seen this sort of thing before, Baxter ... and it's *not* a pretty sight."



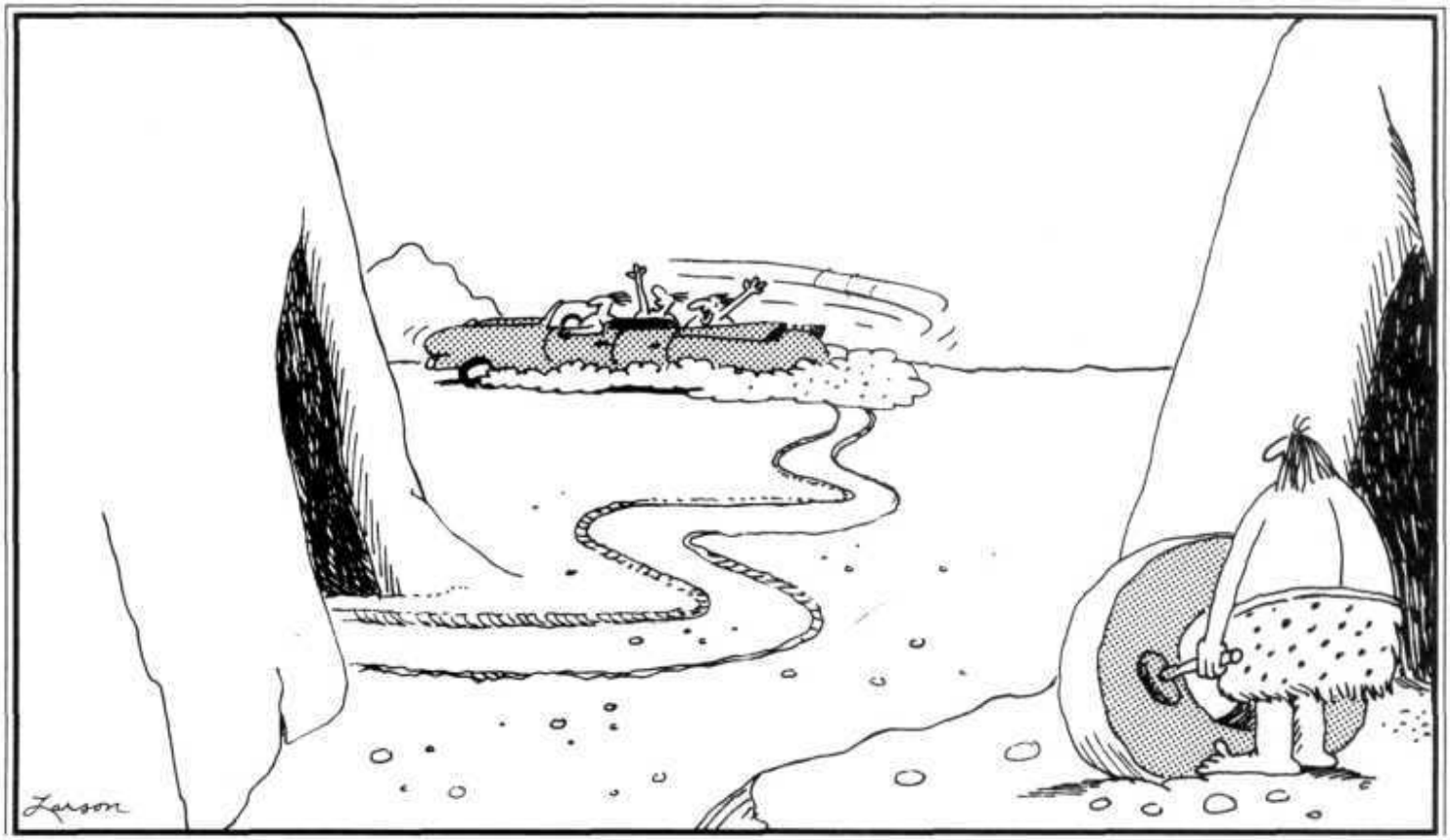
"Just pull it off and apologize, Cromwell ... or we'll go out in the hall and establish this pecking order once and for all!"



"The fuel light's on, Frank! We're all going to die! ... We're all going to die! ... Wait, wait. ... Oh, my mistake—that's the intercom light."

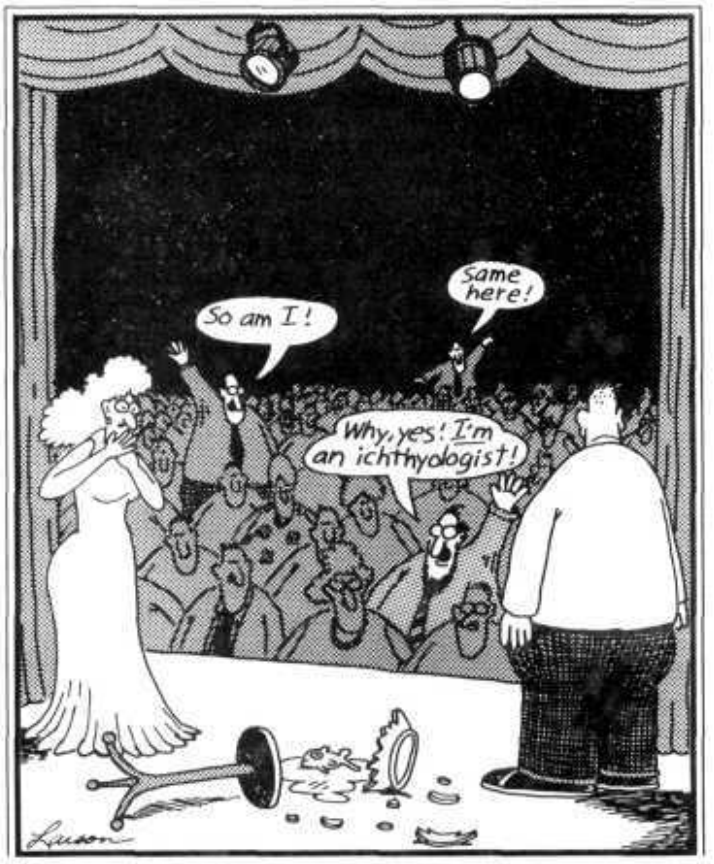


"See how the vegetation has been trampled flat here, Jimmy? That tells me where a deer bedded down for the night. After a while, you'll develop an eye for these things yourself."

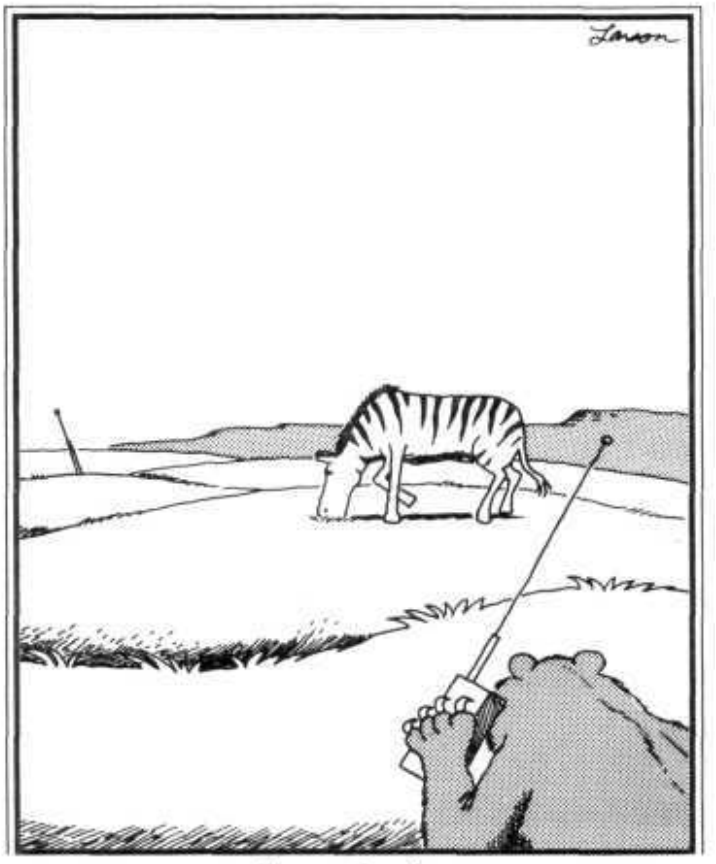


"C'mon, c'mon, buddy! The heart! Hand over the heart! ... And you with the brains! ... Let's have 'em!"

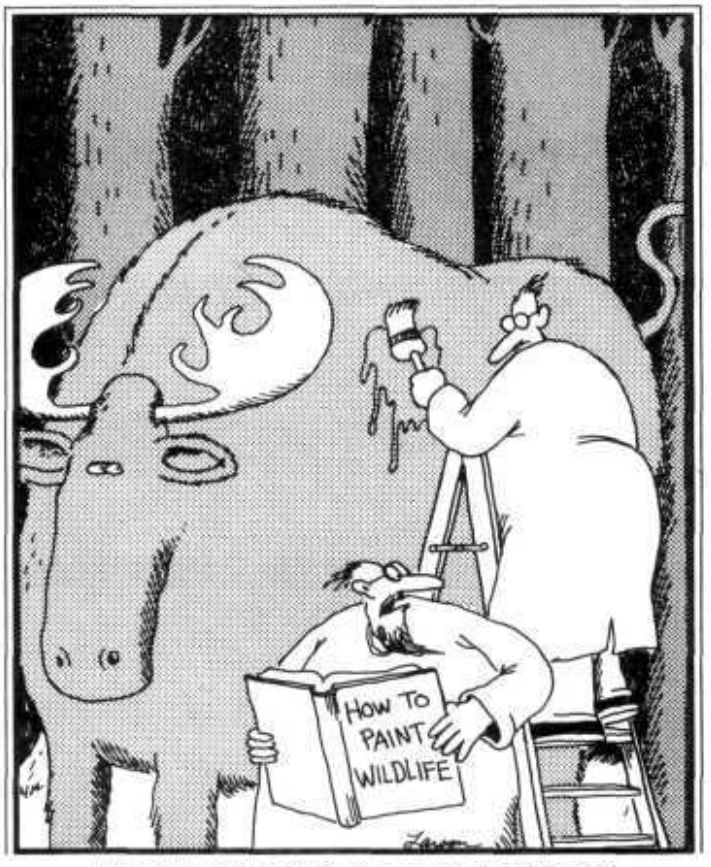
Roger screws up.



A lucky night for Goldy

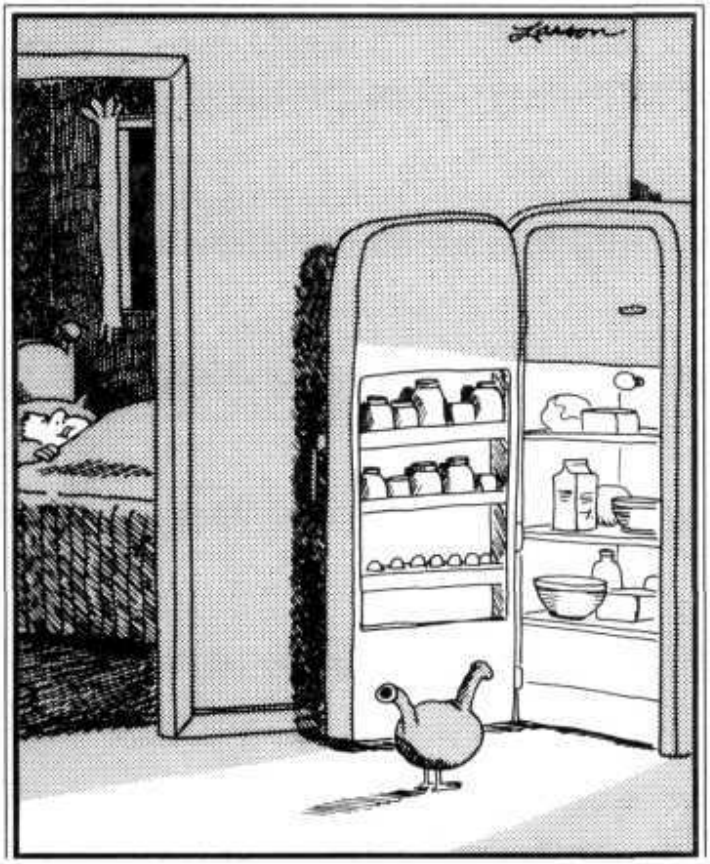


The modern lion

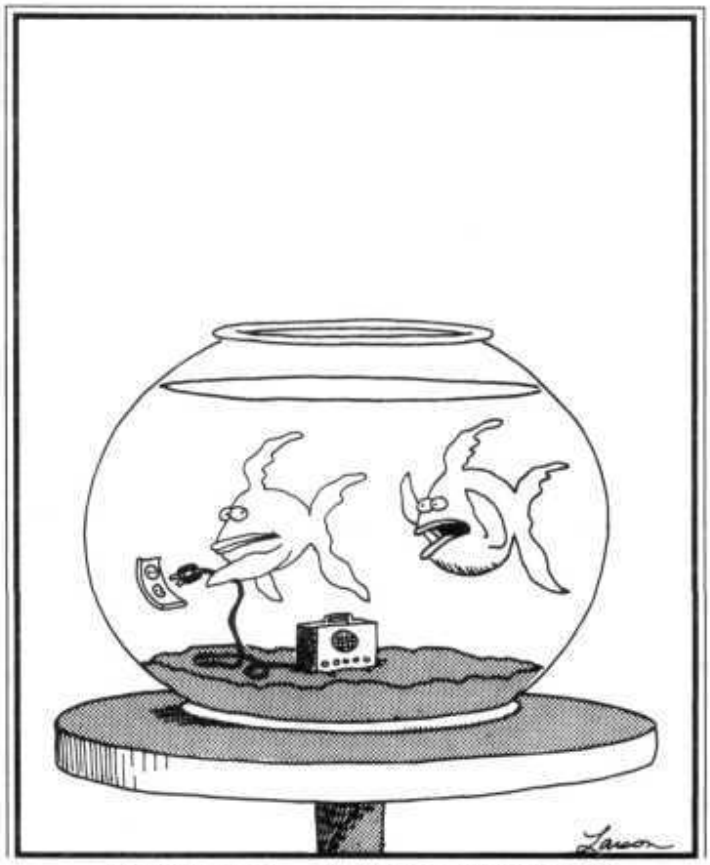


"Hold on there, Dale. It says we should sand between coats."

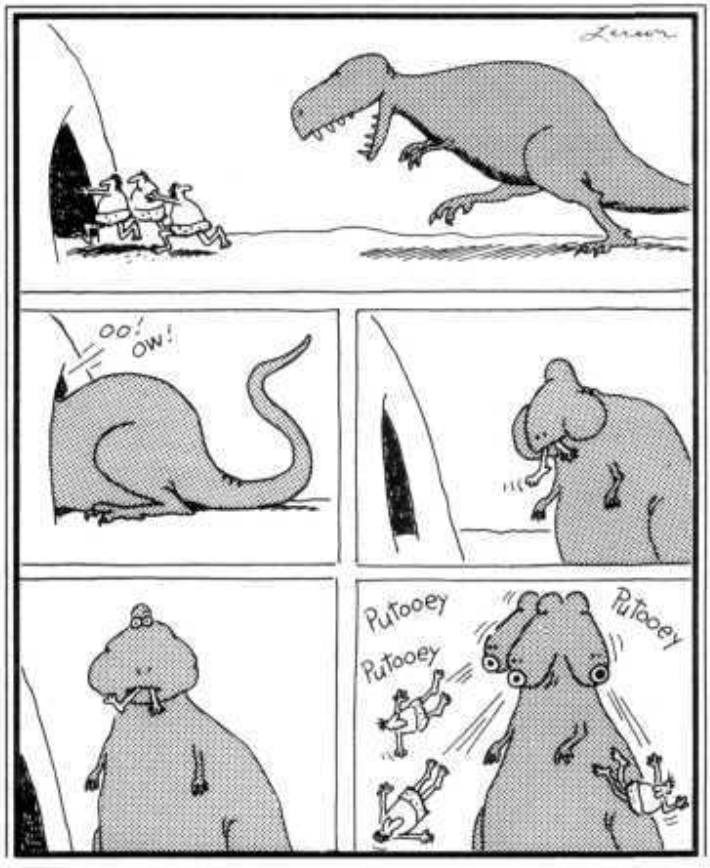
"Hey! ... You kids!"



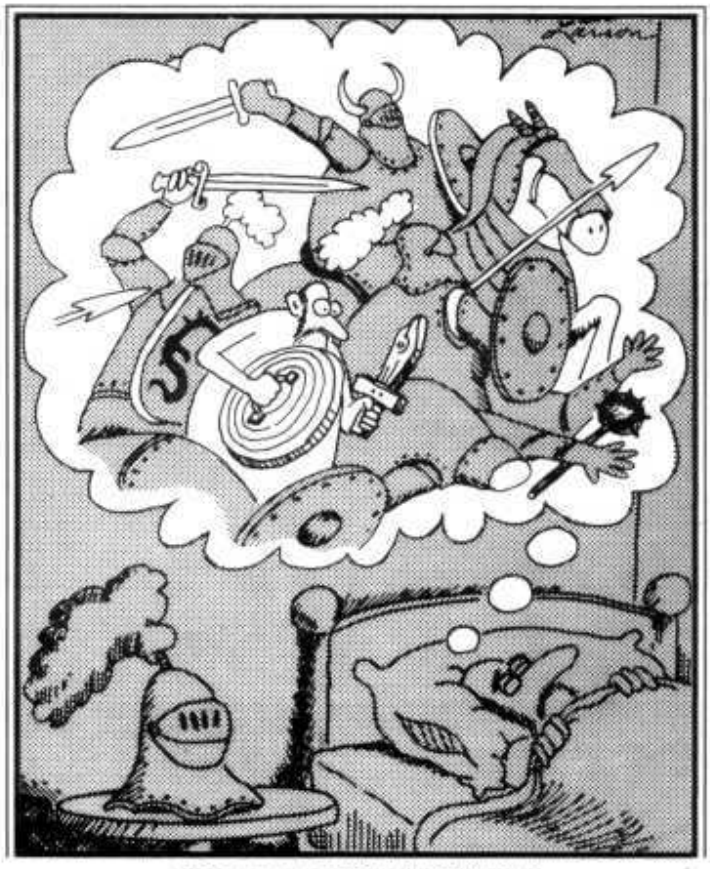
Late at night, his own stomach would foil Gordon's attempt at dieting.



"Bob! You fool. ... Don't plug that thing in!"



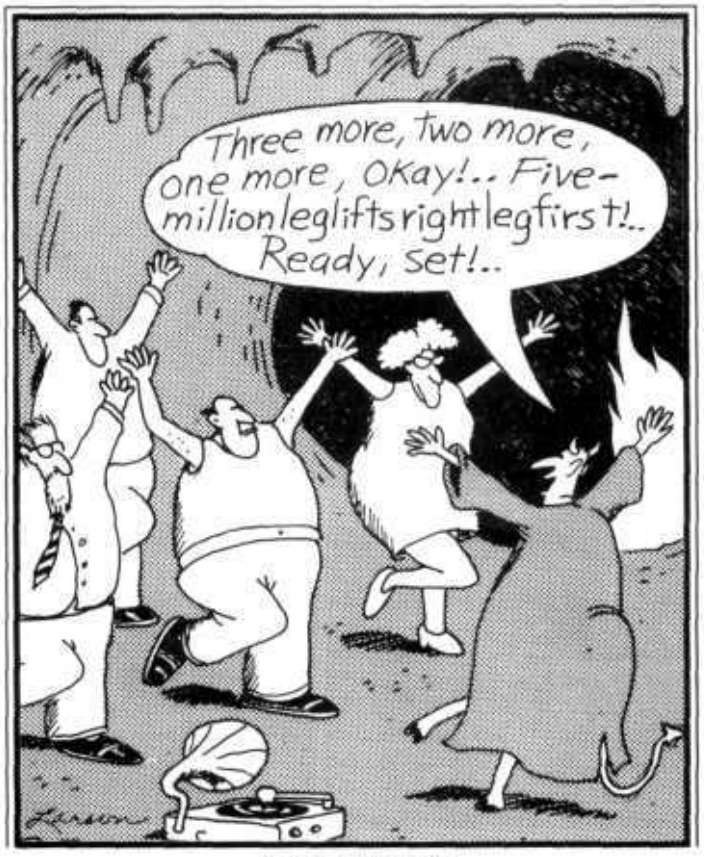
In the days before soap



Common medieval nightmare

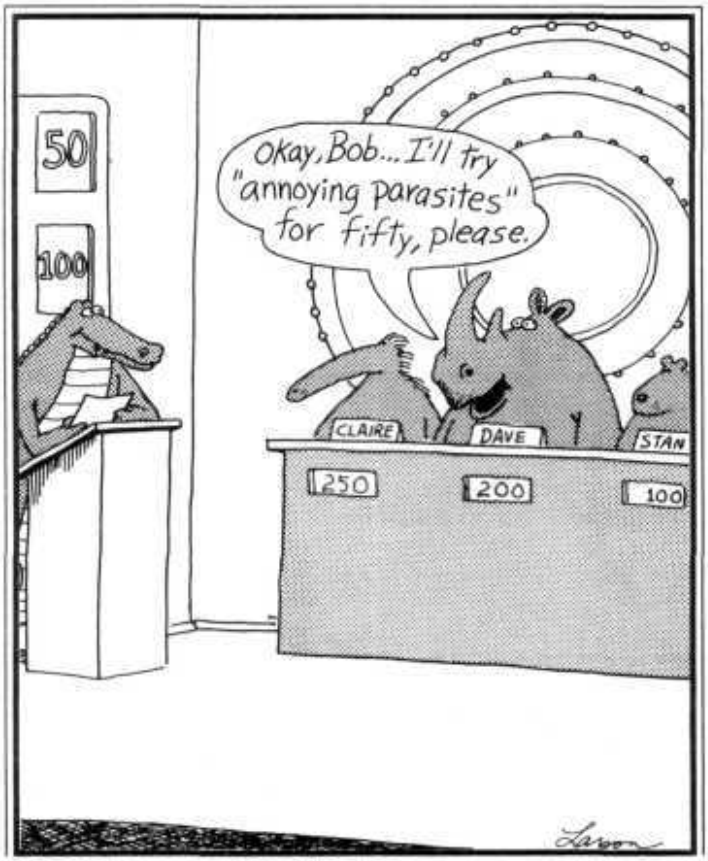
"For crying out loud, Doris. ... You gotta drag that thing out *every* time we all get together?"

"I'm leaving you, Charles ... and I'm taking the grubs with me."



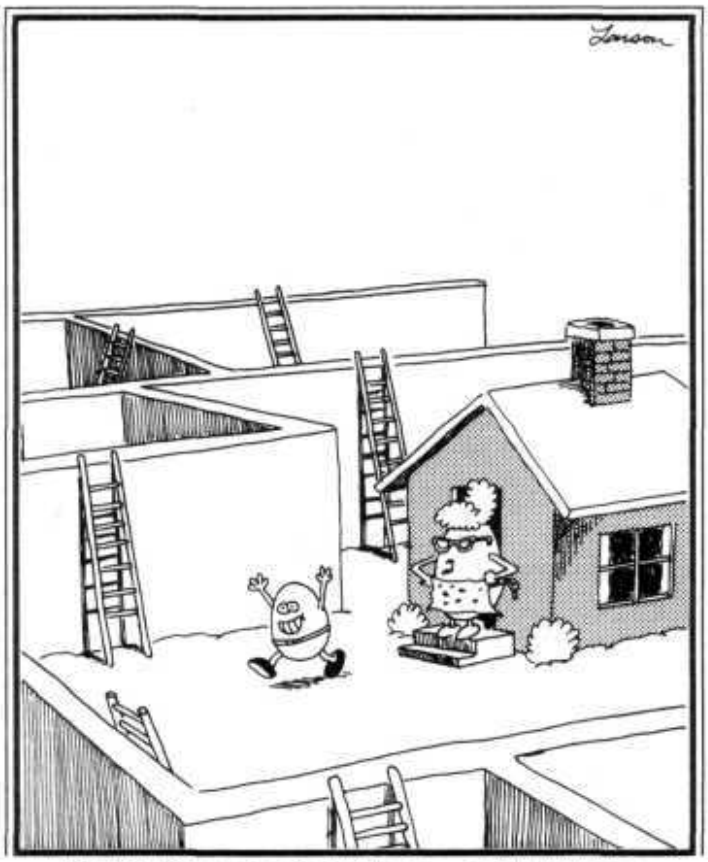
Aerobics in hell

Andrew is hesitant, remembering his fiasco with the car of straw.

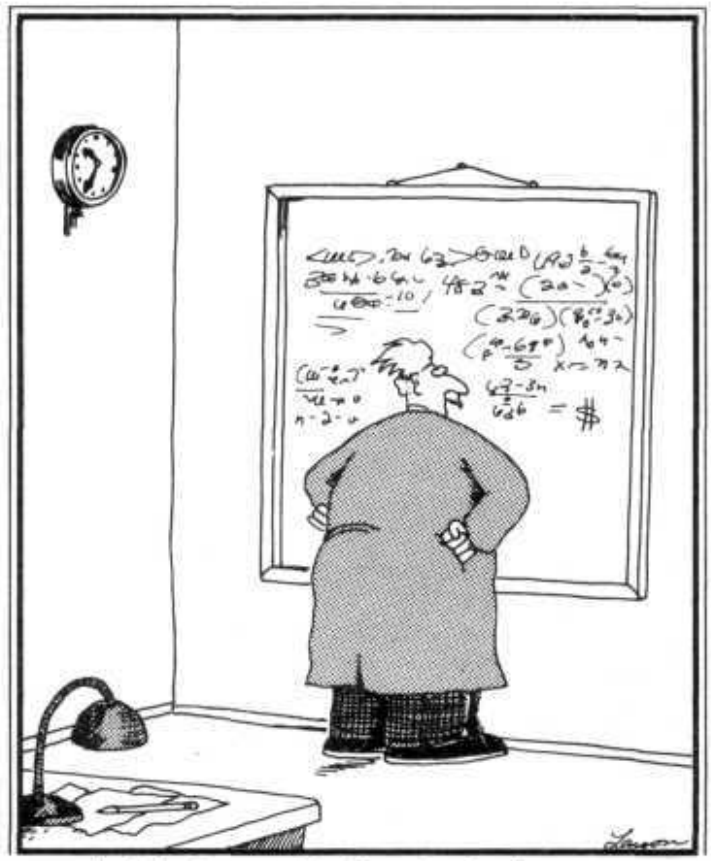


Animal game shows

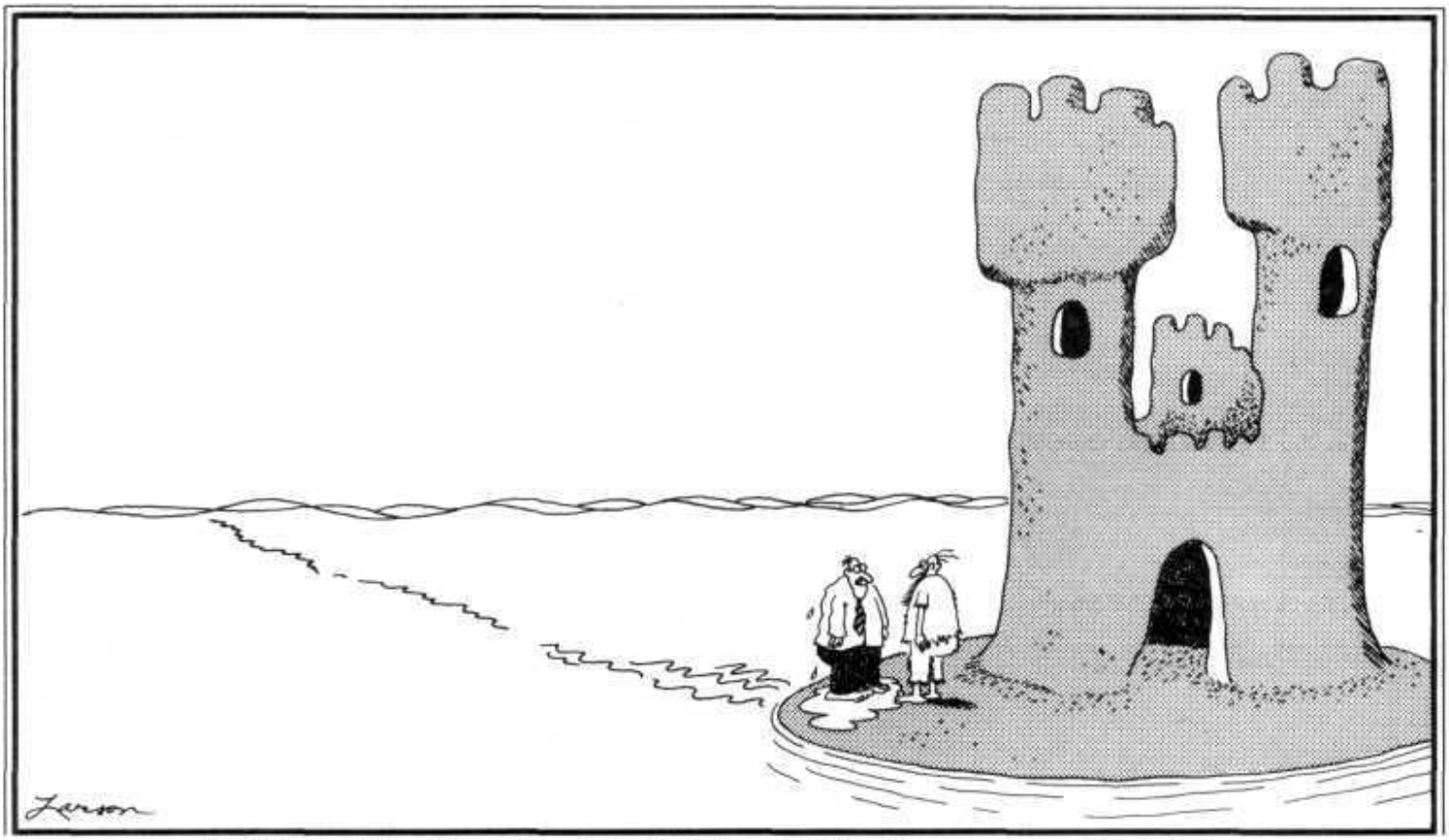
"He's using blanks—pass it on."



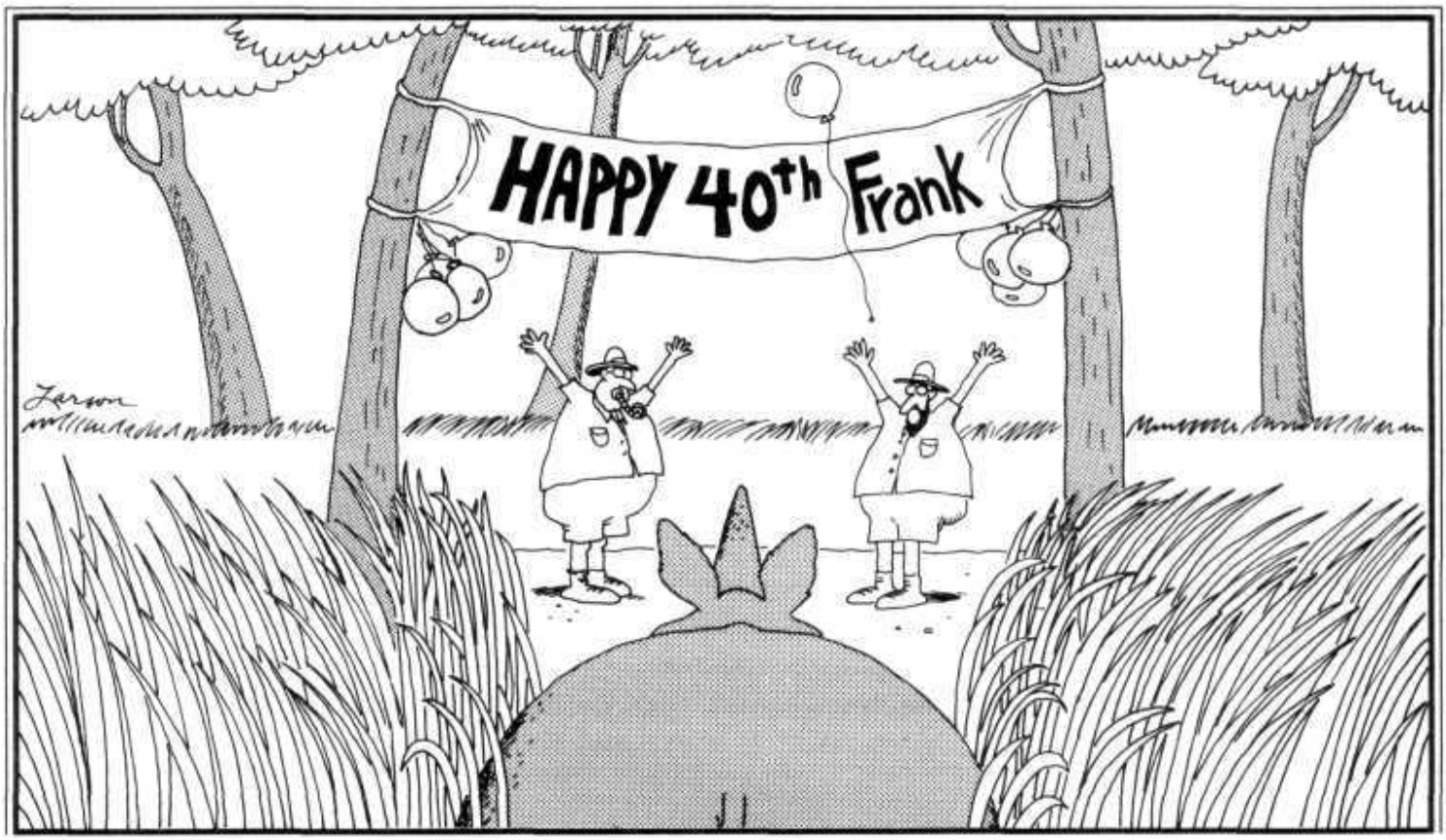
"Be back by suppertime, Hump ... and, as always, you be careful."



Einstein discovers that time is actually money.

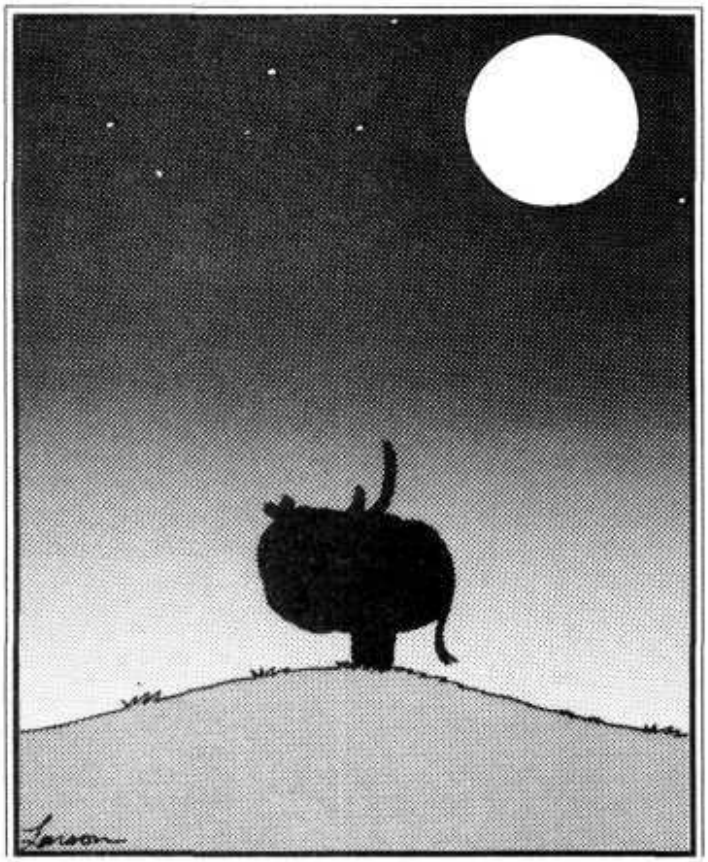


"And the next thing I knew, the whole ship just sunk right out from under me. So what's the deal with you? ... You been here long or what?"



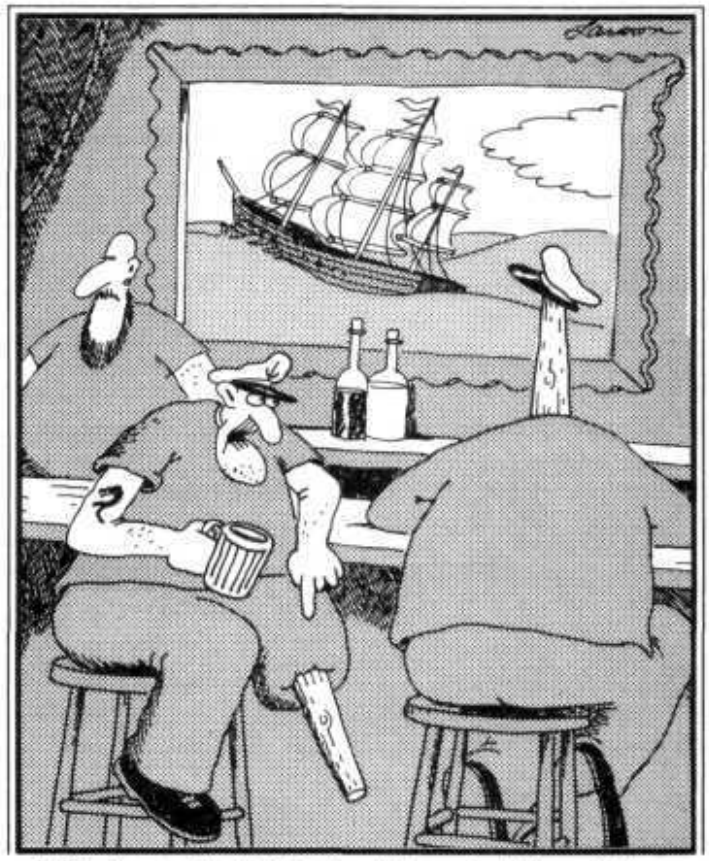
Suddenly, everything froze. Only the buzzing of the tsetse flies could be heard. The crackling grass wasn't Cummings returning to camp after all, but an animal who didn't like to be surprised.

The livestock would gather every morning, hoping for one of Farmer Dan's popular "airplane" rides.

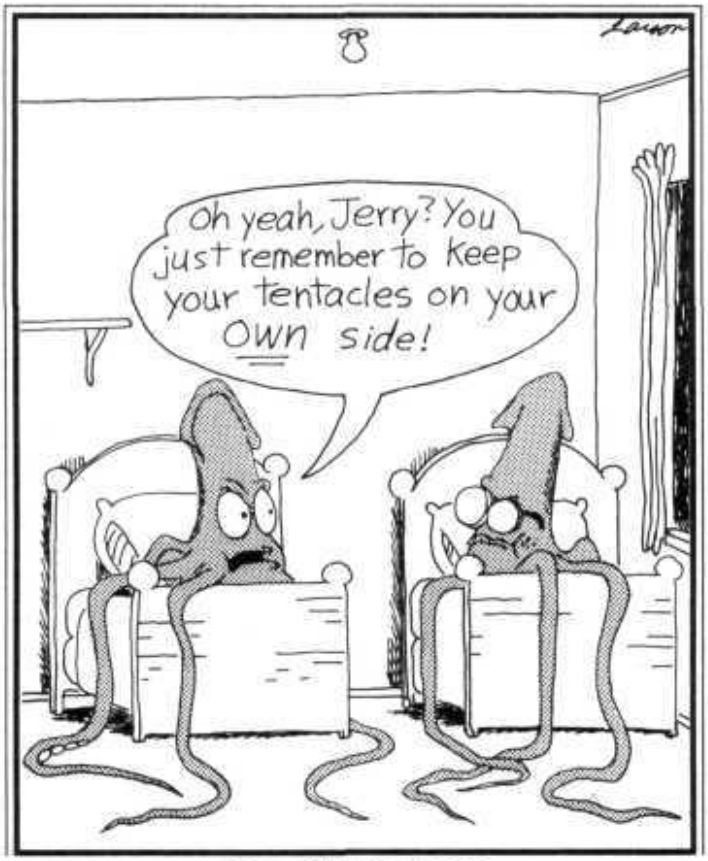


The rhino in repose

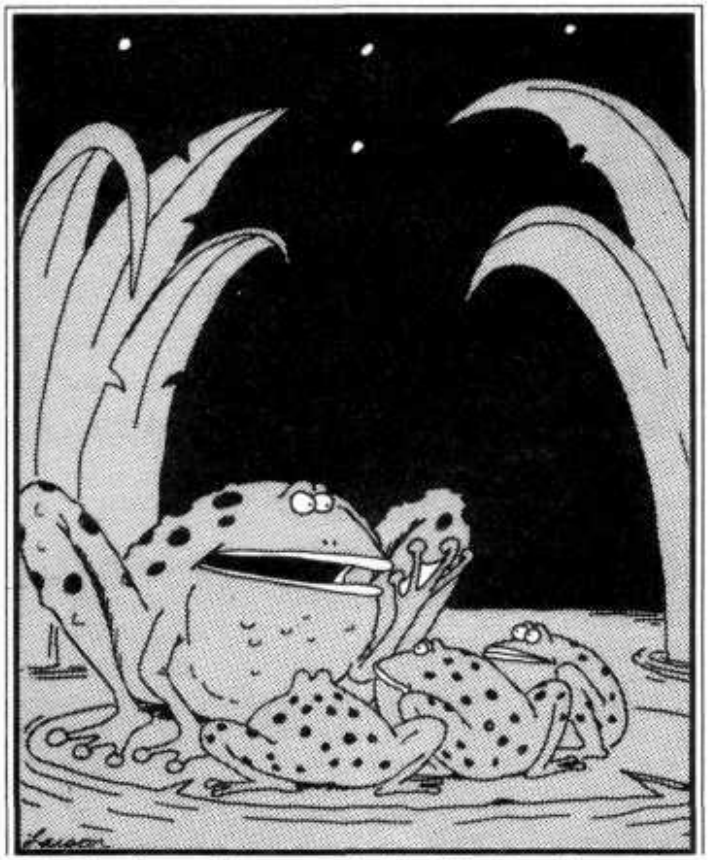
"Never mind the name. You just tell your boss some *thing* is here to see him!"



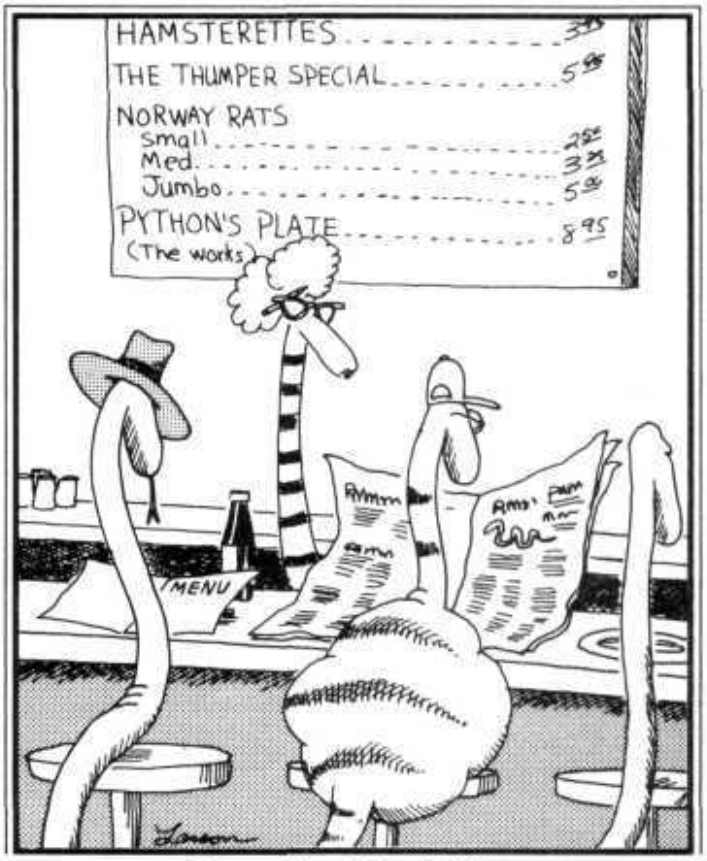
"Well, I guess that ain't a bad story—but let me tell you about the time I lost *this*!"



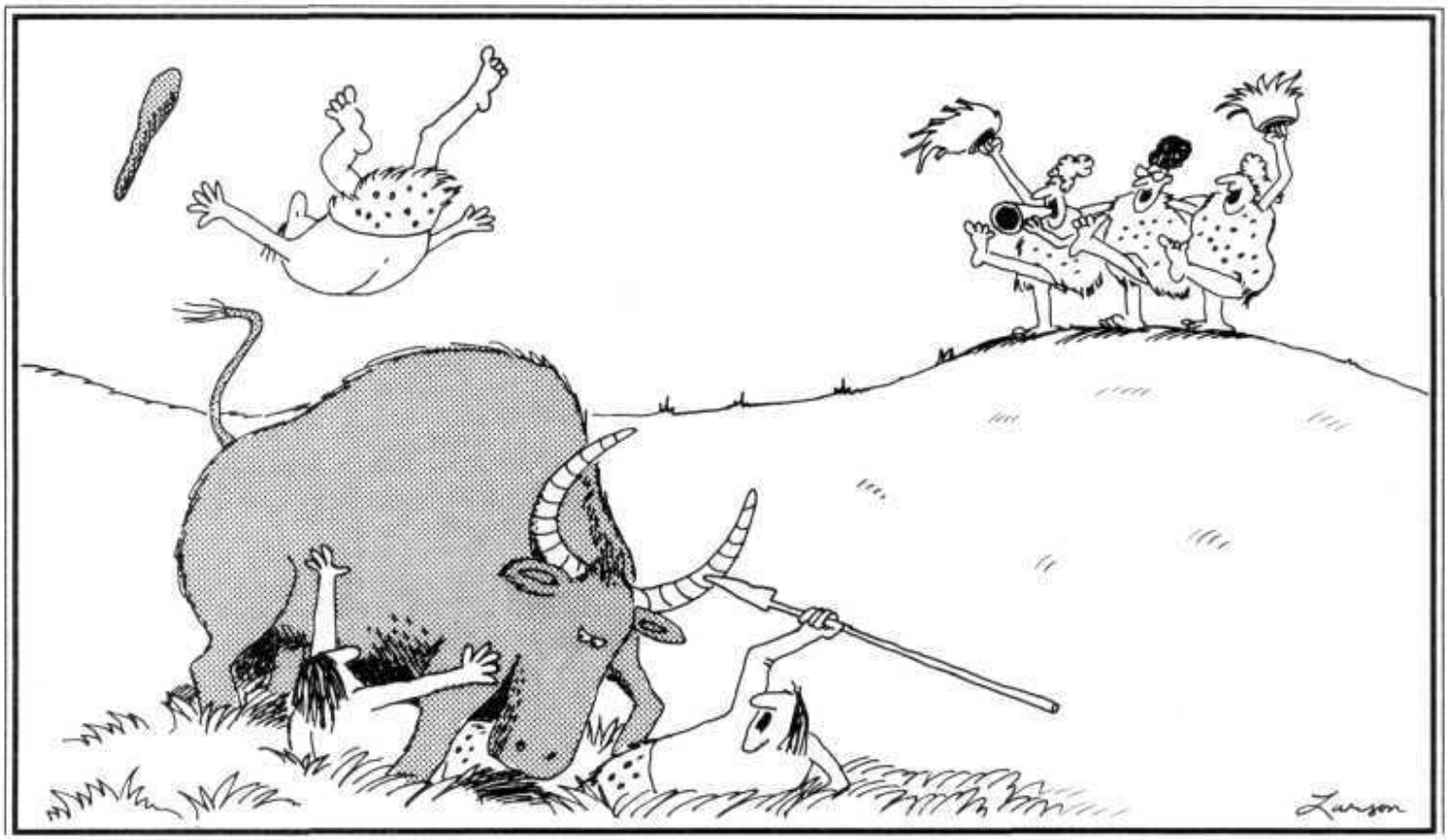
The squid kids at home

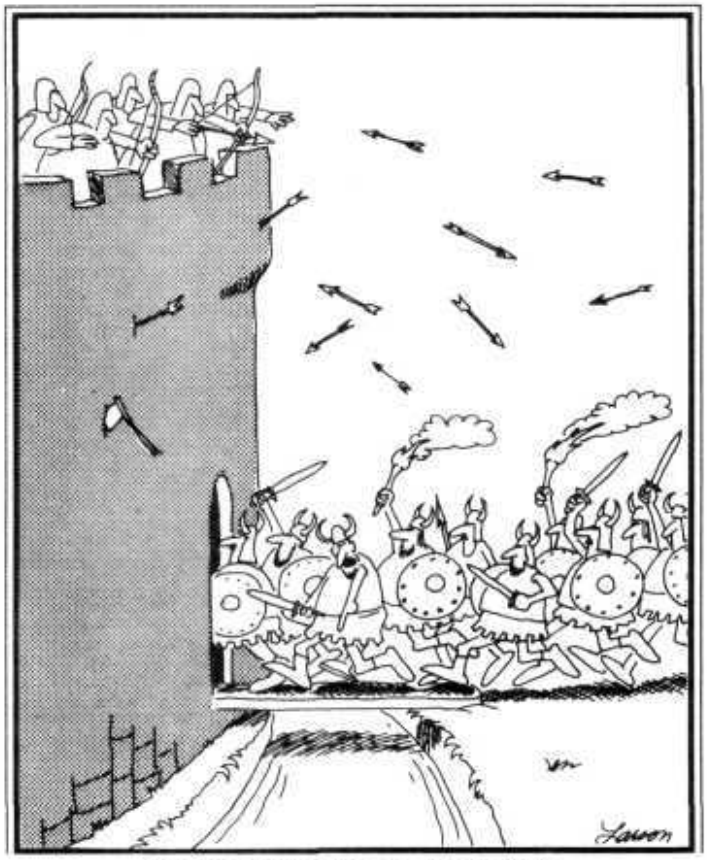


"And as the net slooooooowly lifted him from the water, the voice kept whispering, 'I want your legs. ... I want your legs.'"

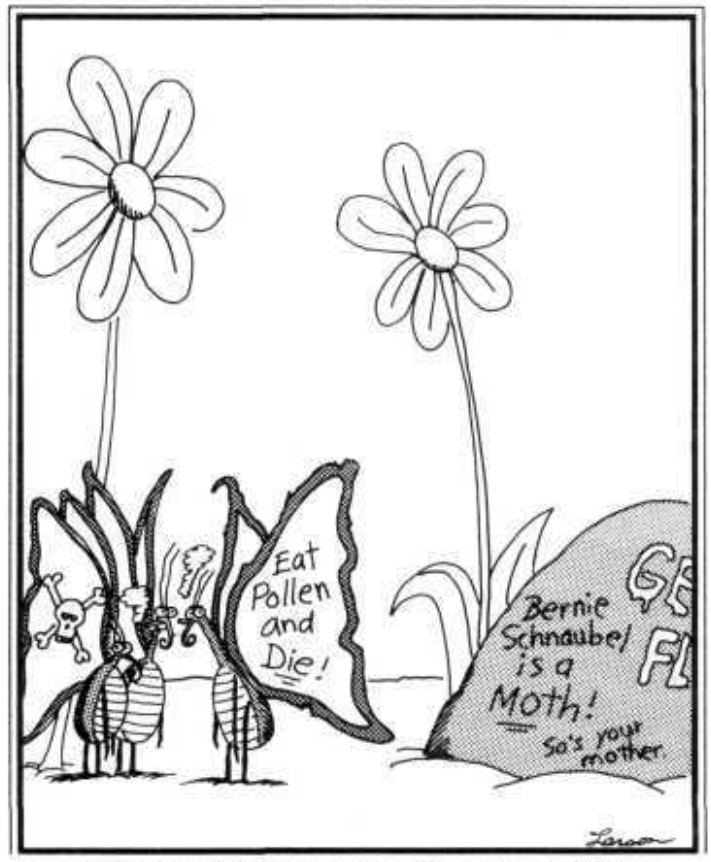


Down at the Eat and Slither

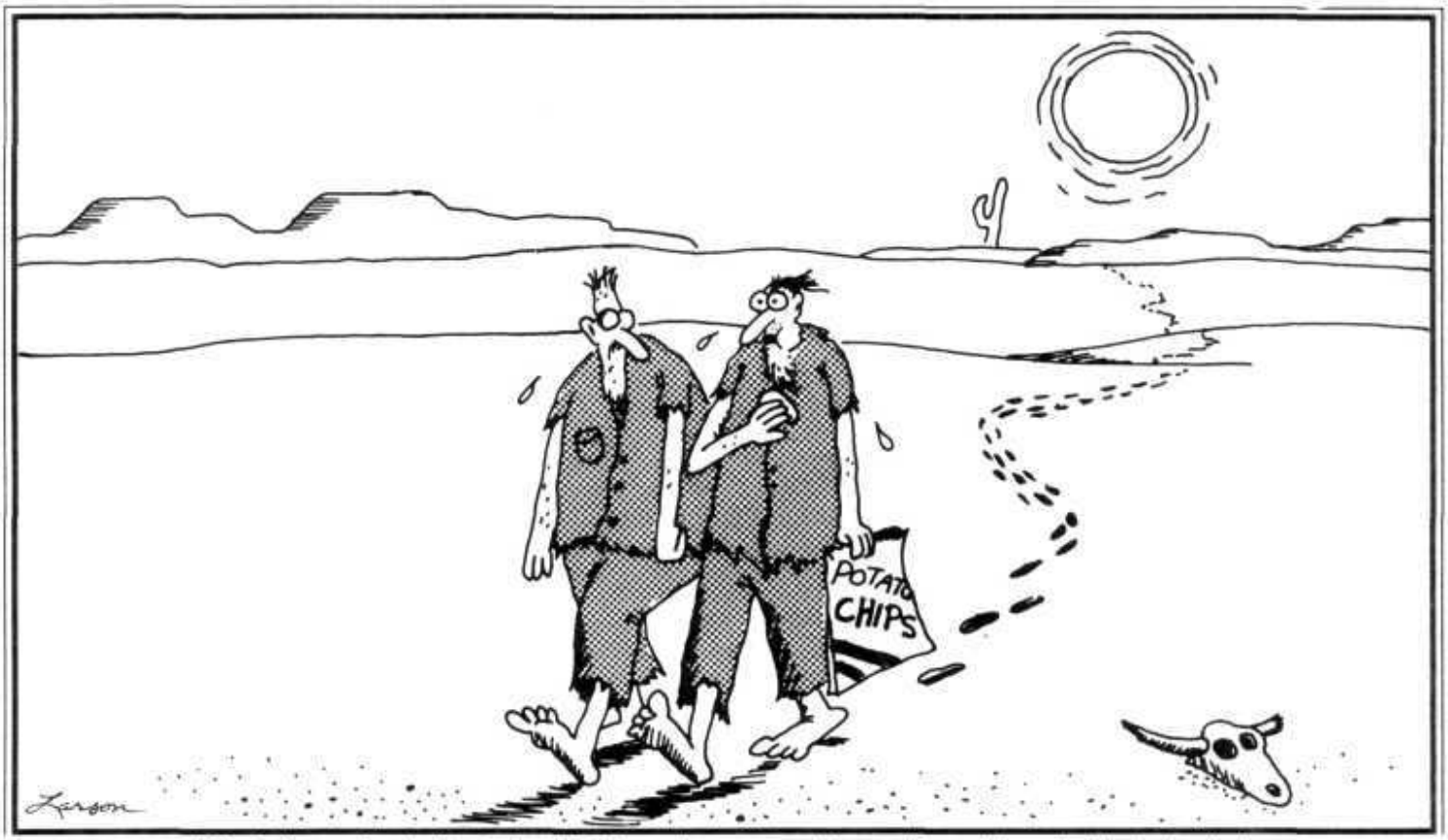




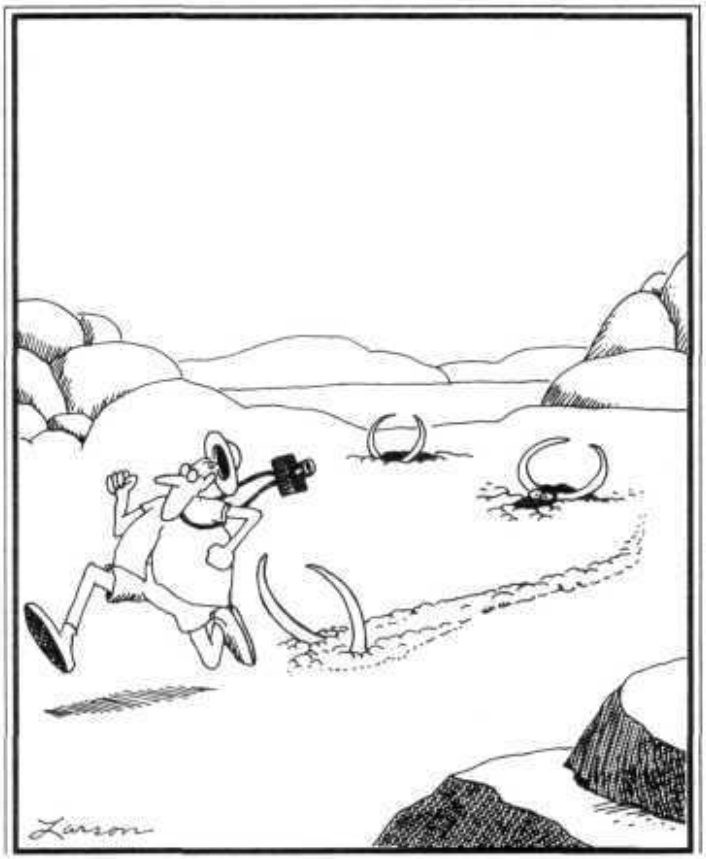
"Oo! Goldfish, everyone! Goldfish!"



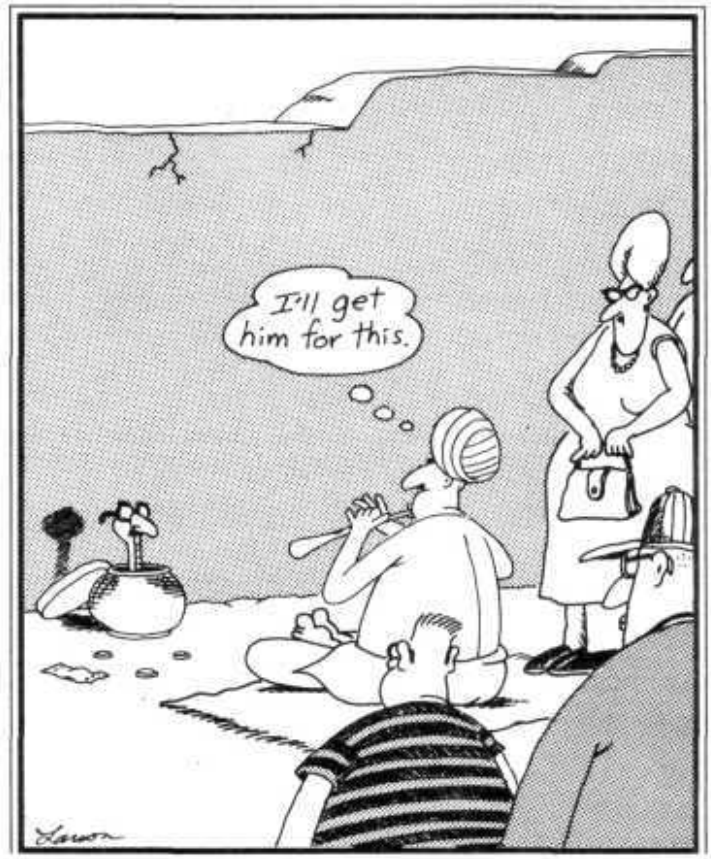
Butterflies from the wrong side of the meadow

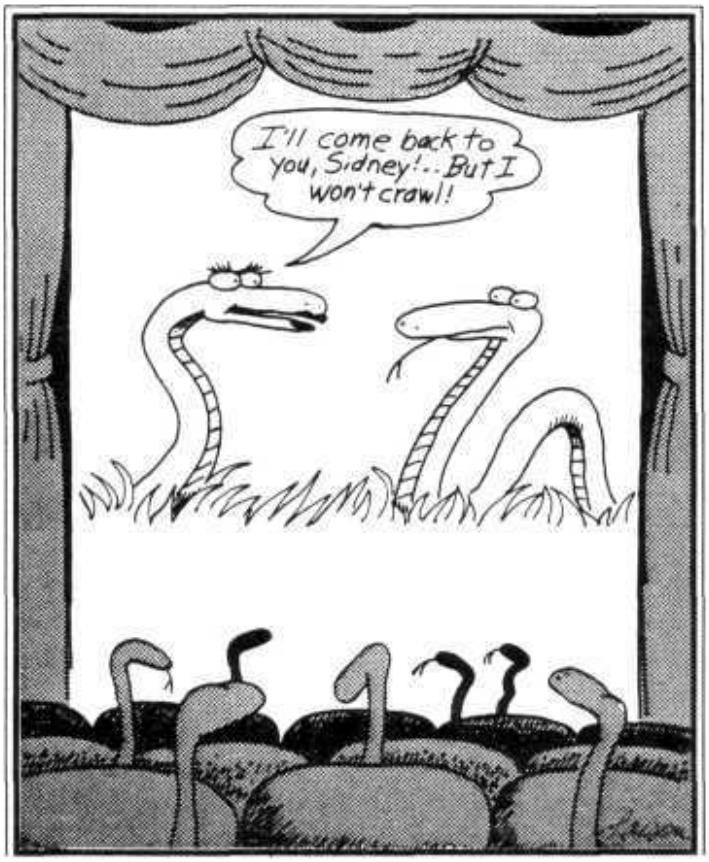


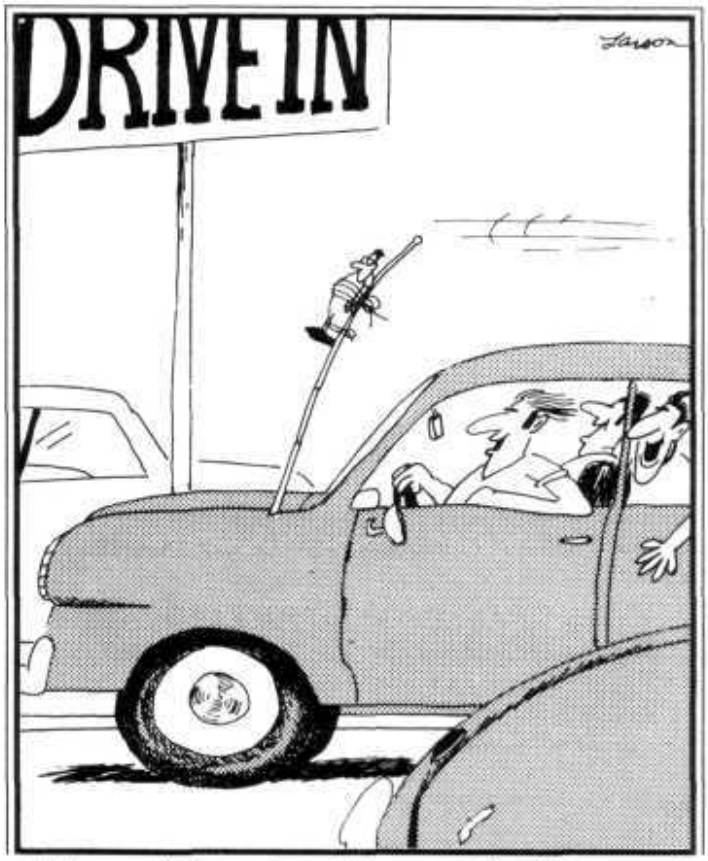
"Uh-oh, I've got a feeling I shouldn't have been munching on these things for the last mile."



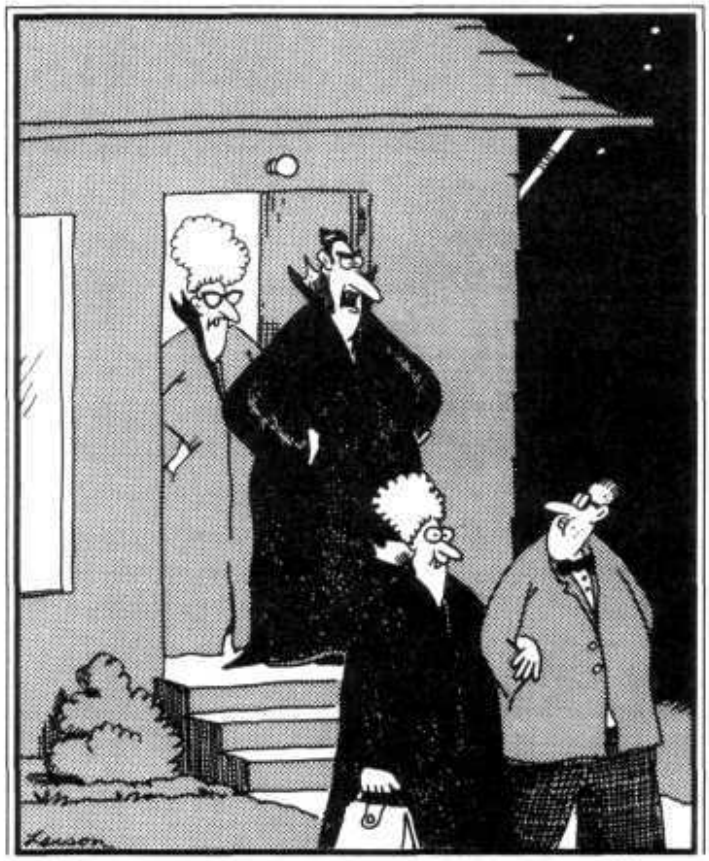
Charles wanders into a herd of dirt buffaloes.



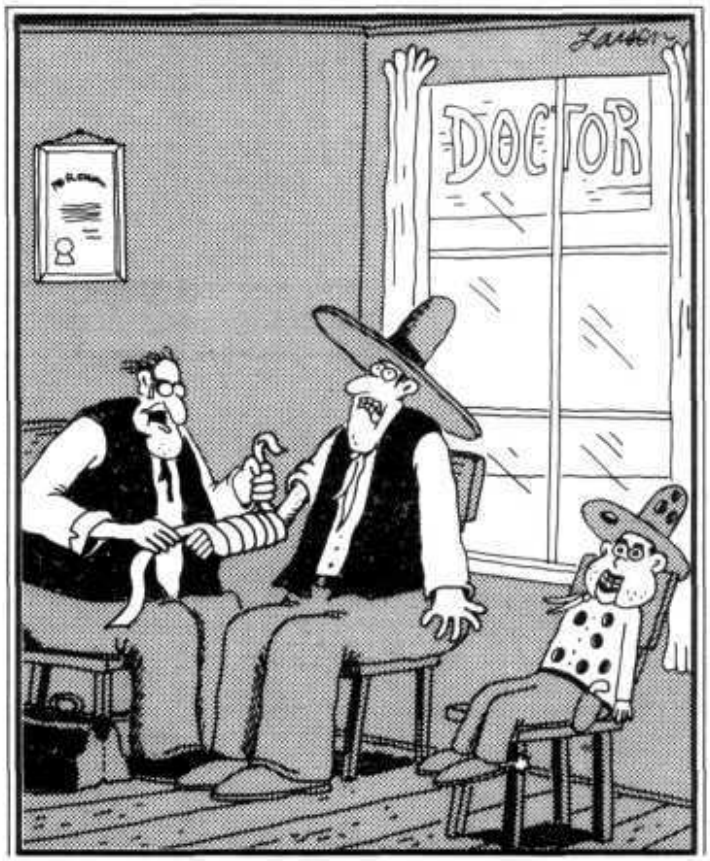




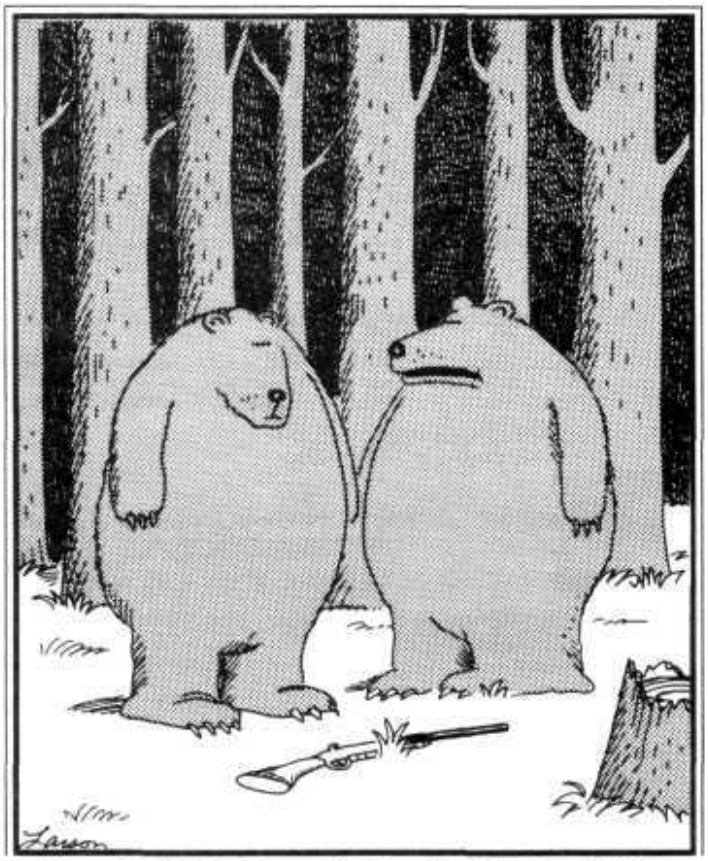
As the smallest member of the gang, Wendall was used as an attention-getter while cruising for girls.



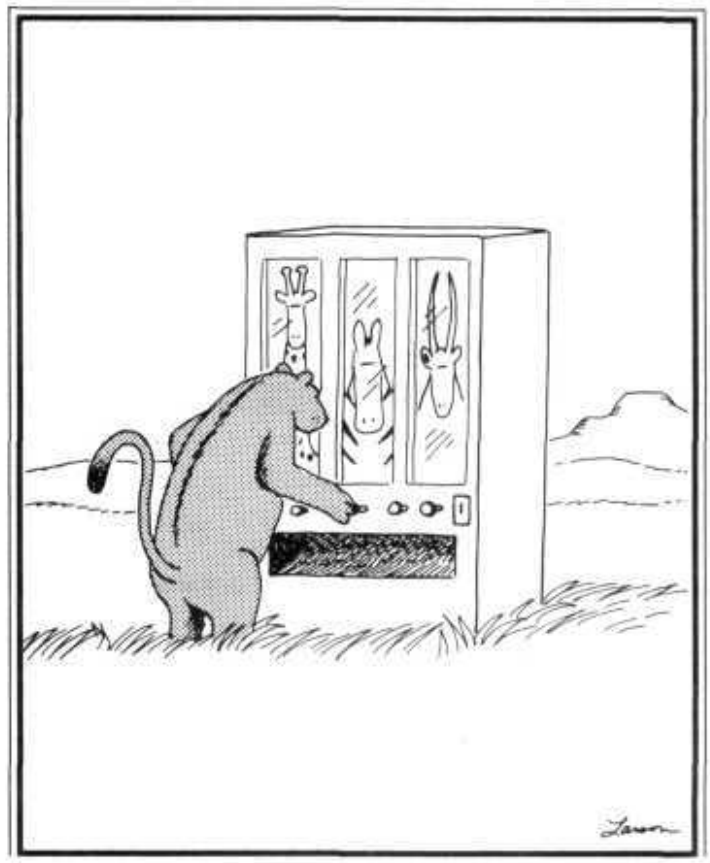
"One more thing, young man. You get my daughter home before sunrise—I don't want you coming back here with a pile of dried bones."



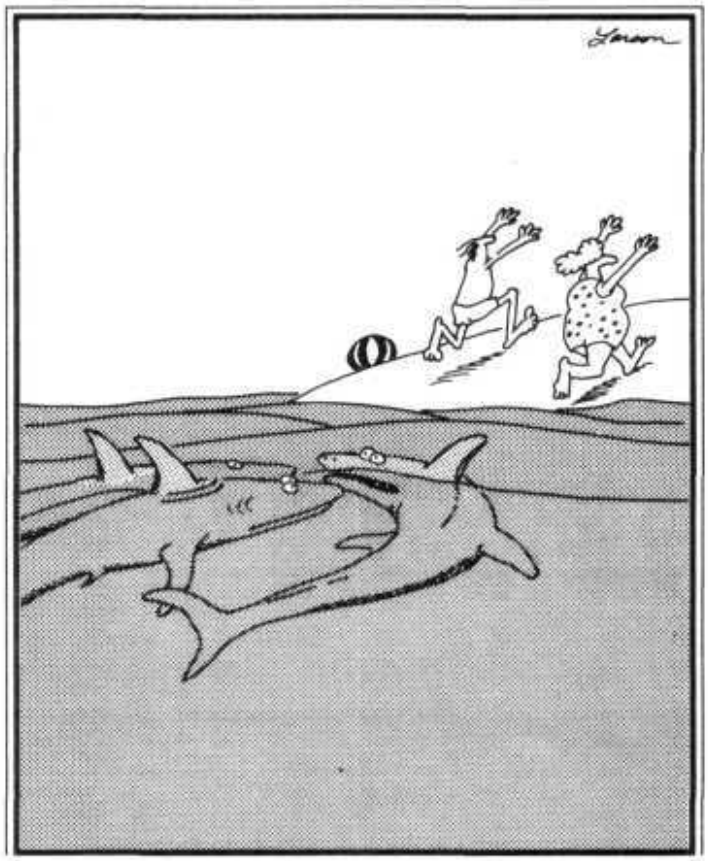
"You're gonna be OK, mister, but I can't say the same for your little buddy over there. ... The way I hear it, he's the one that mouthed off to them gunfighters in the first place."



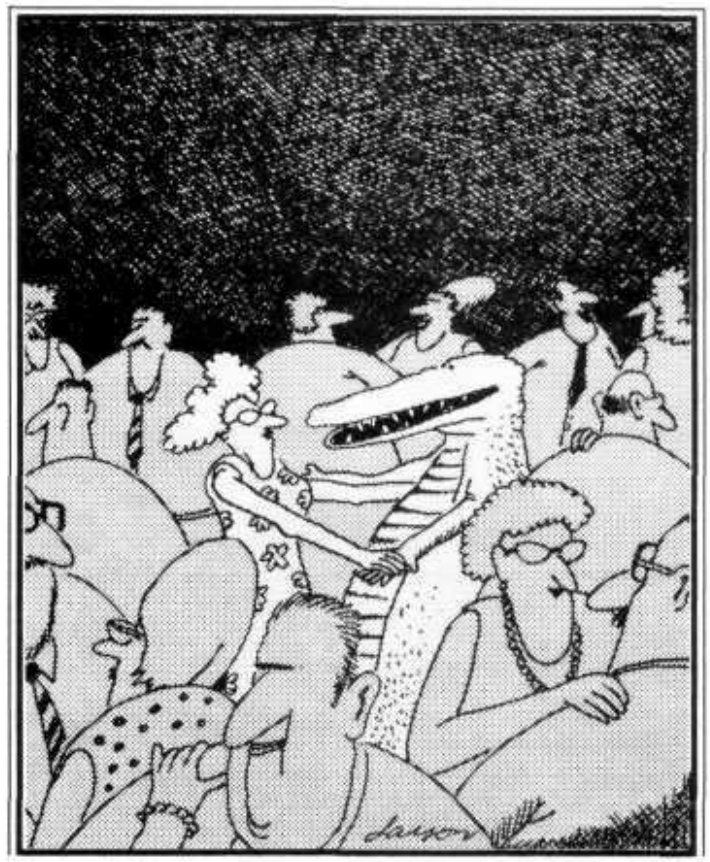
"Thunderstick? ... You actually said, 'Thunderstick?' ... That, my friend, is a Winchester 30.06."



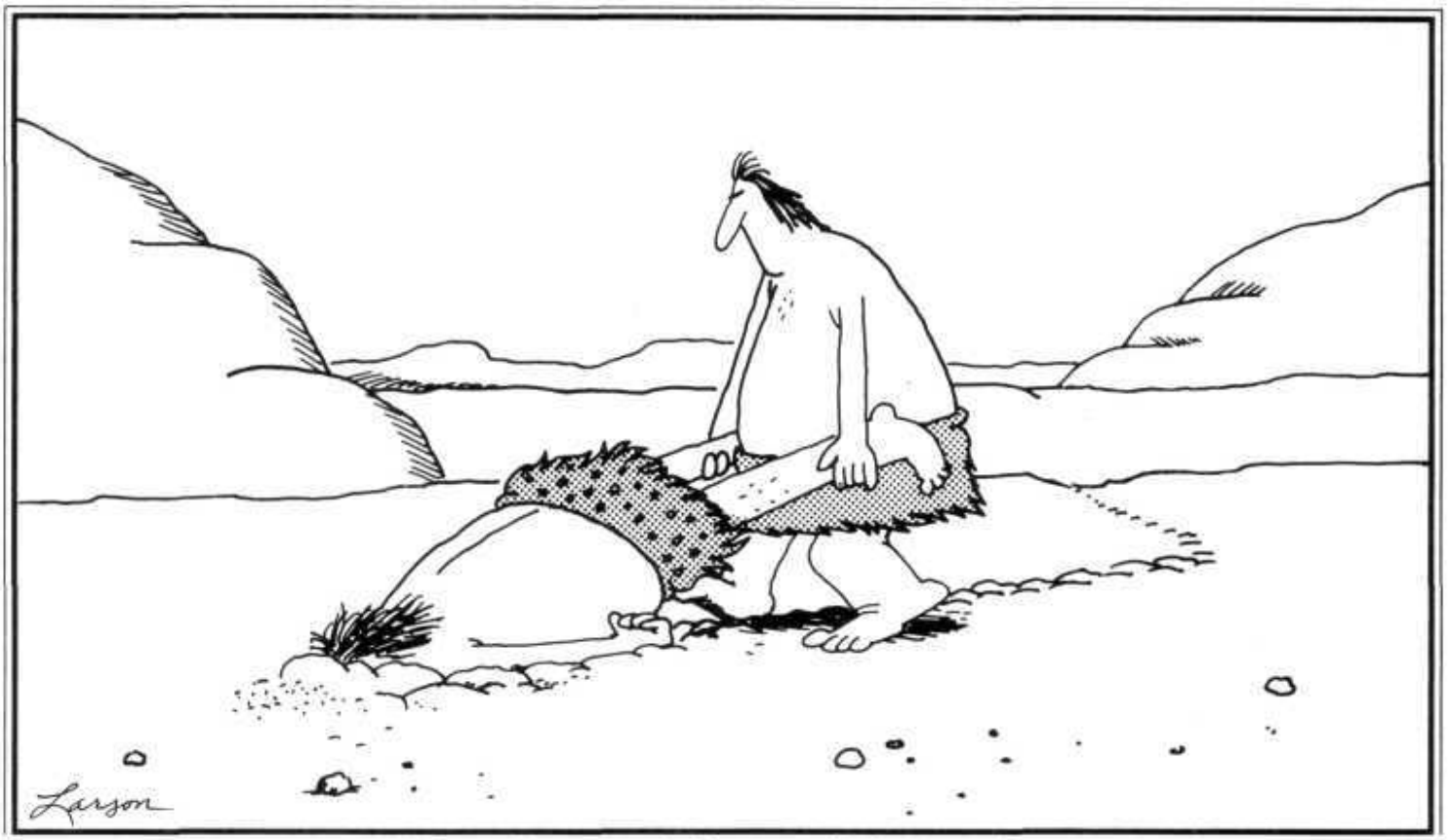
Vending machines of the Serengeti



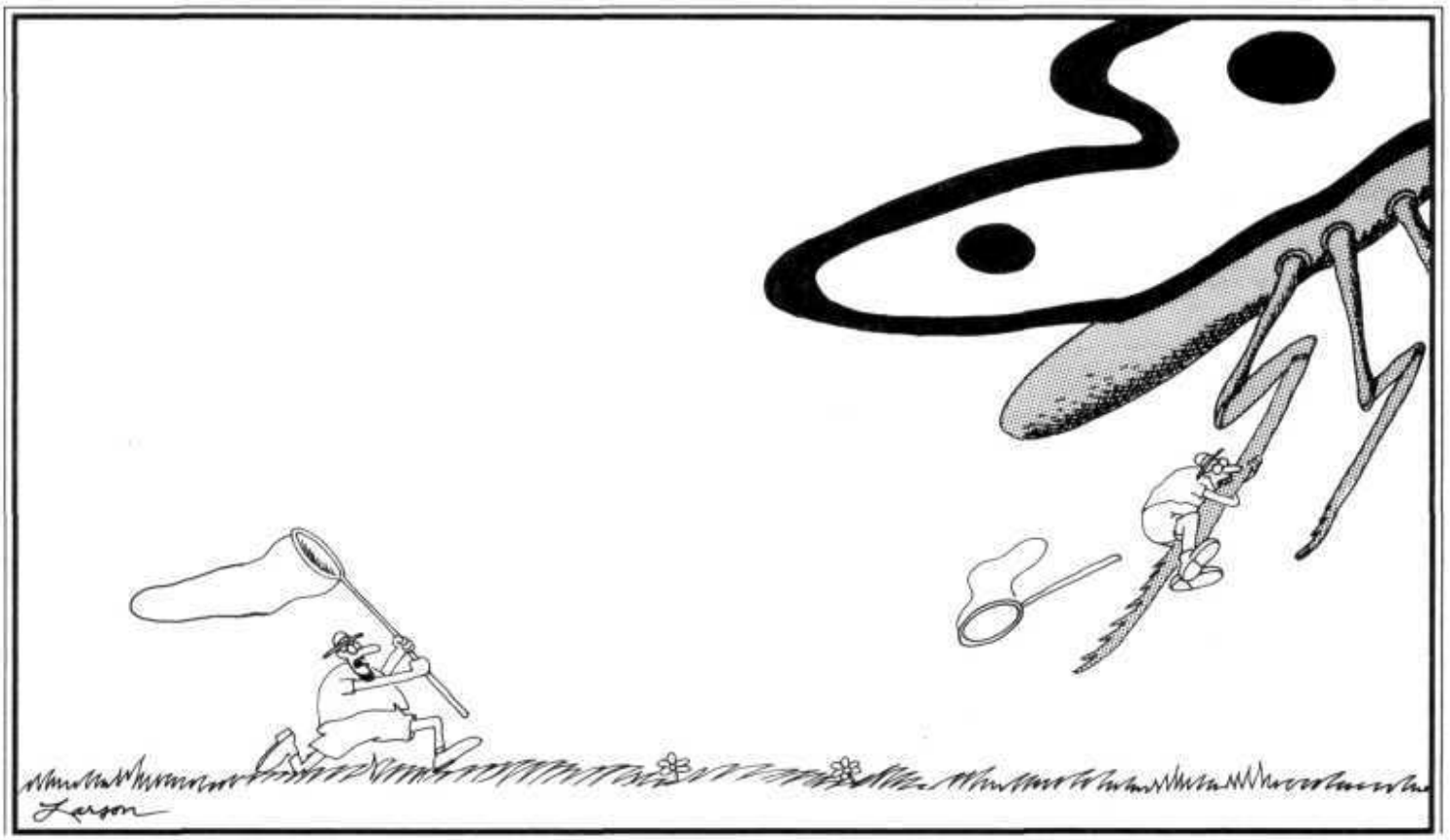
"Well, somehow they knew we were—whoa! Our dorsal fins are sticking out! I wonder how many times *that's* screwed things up?"



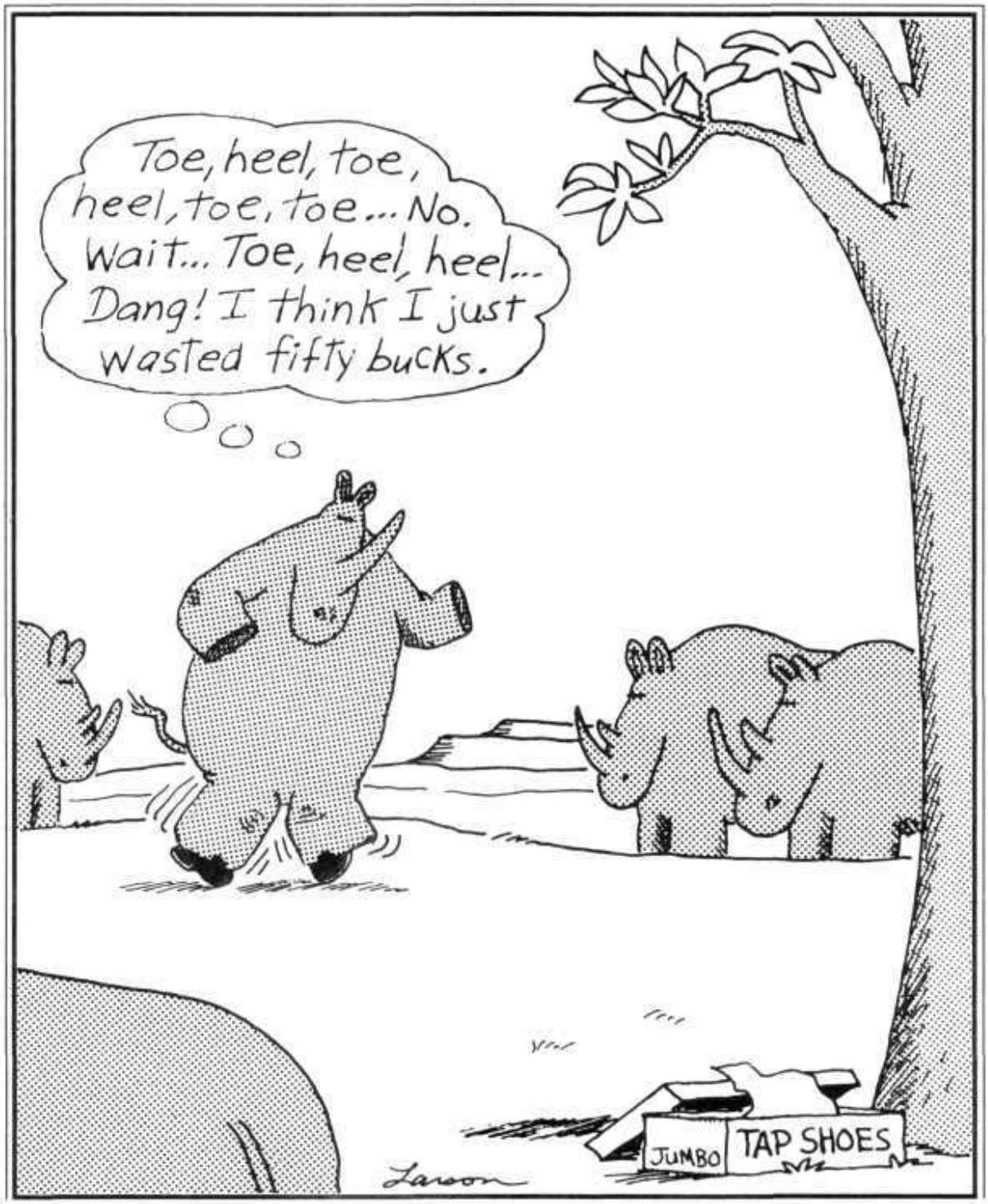
"My turn. ... Well, I'm originally from the shores of the upper Nile and ... saaaaaaay. ... Did anyone ever tell you your pupils are ROUND?"

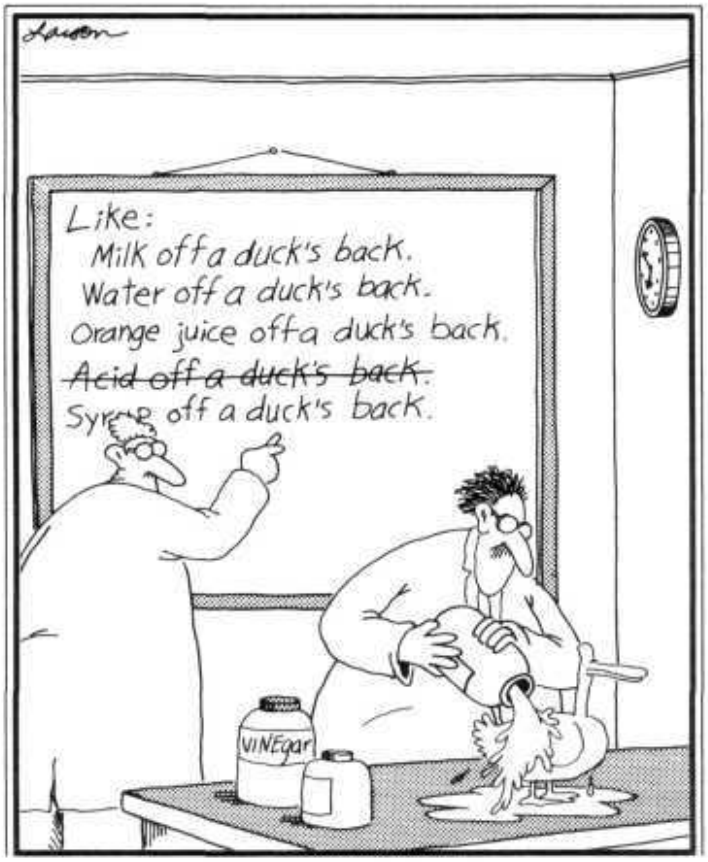


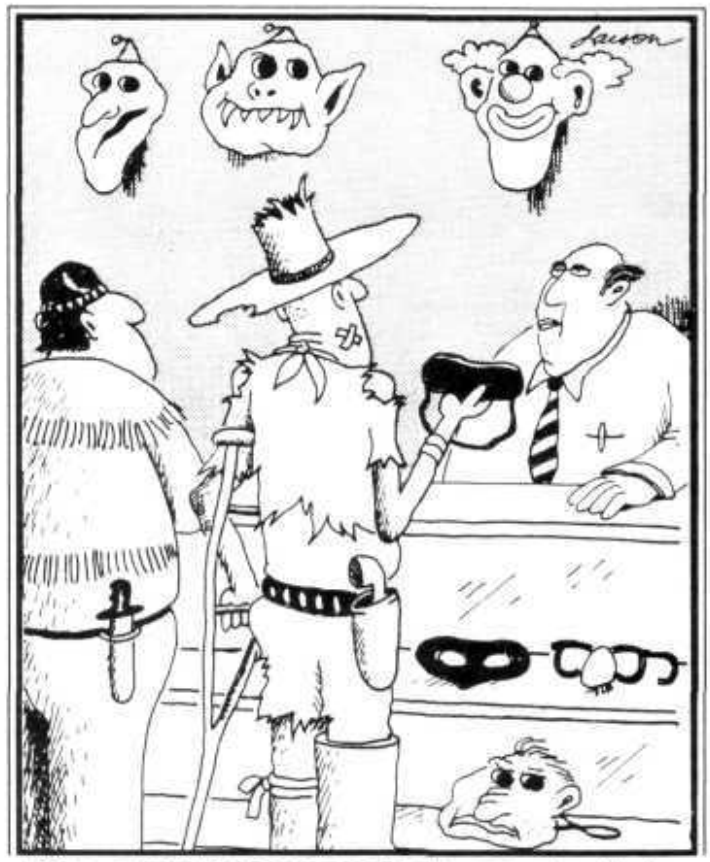
"Barrow"—precursor to the game of "wheelbarrow"



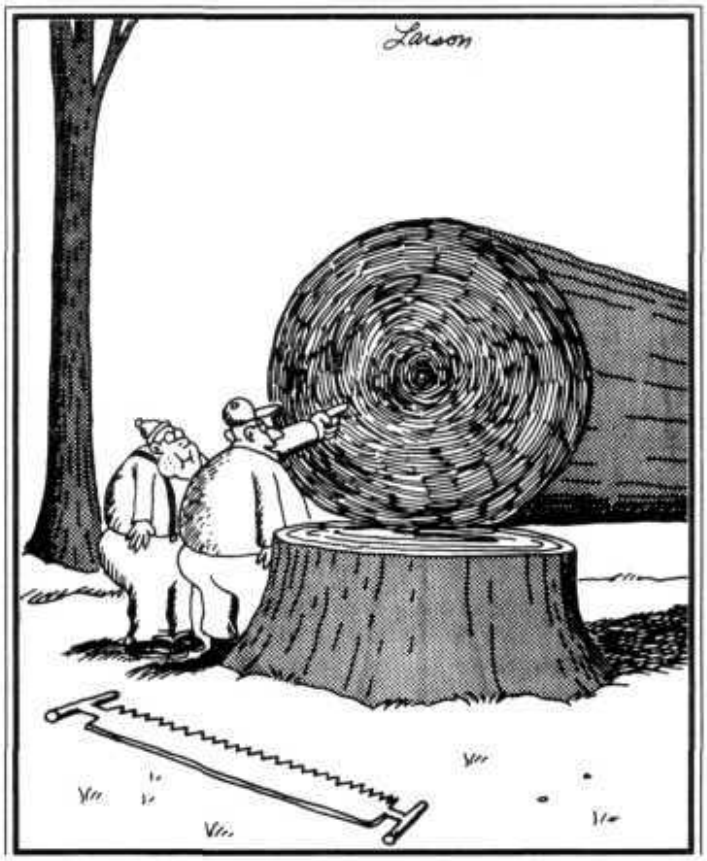
"To the death, Carlson! Hang on to the death!"


Toe, heel, toe, heel, toe, toe... No. Wait... Toe, heel, heel... Dang! I think I just wasted fifty bucks.
JUMBO
TAP SHOES
Larson

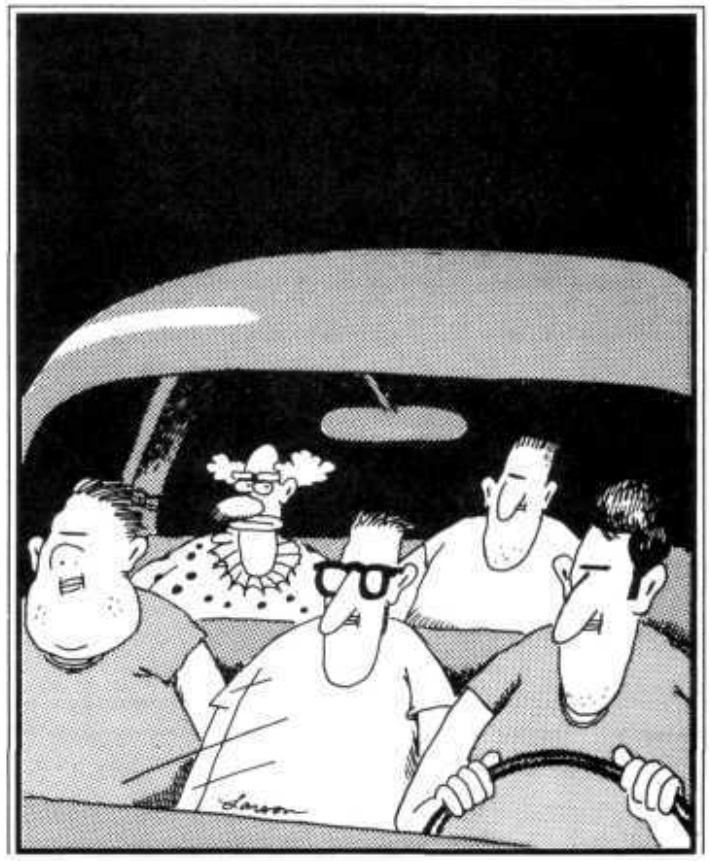




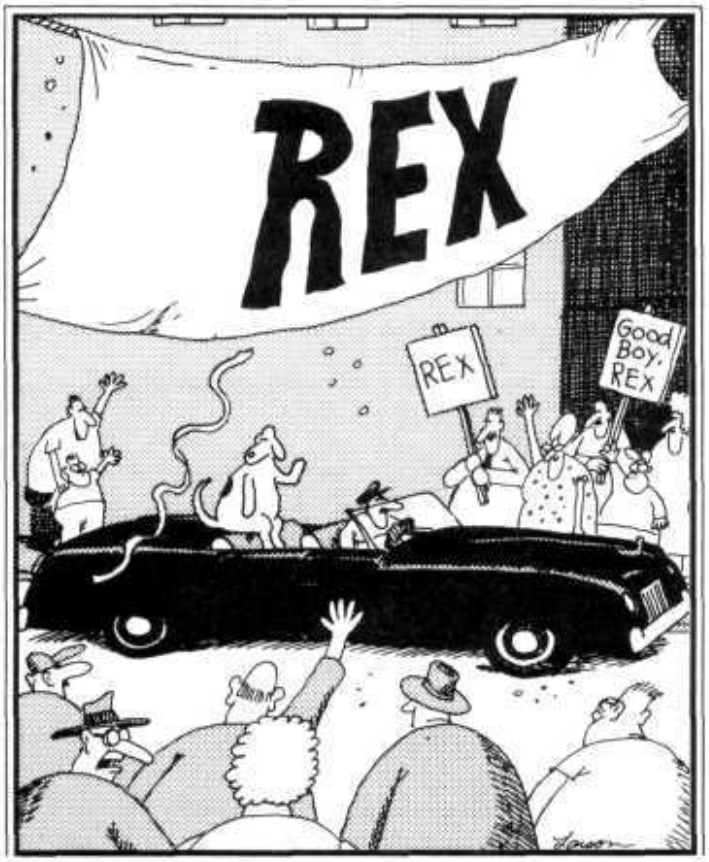
"Say ... wasn't there supposed to be a couple of holes punched in this thing?"



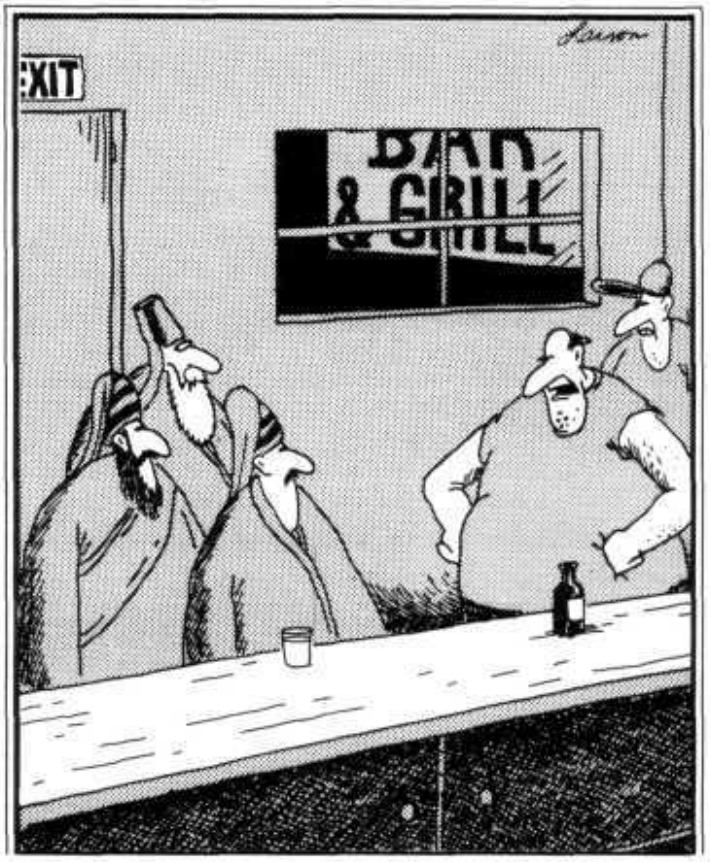
"And see this ring right here, Jimmy? ... That's another time when the old fellow miraculously survived some big forest fire."



Deep inside, Brian wondered if the other guys really listened to his ideas or regarded him only as comic relief.

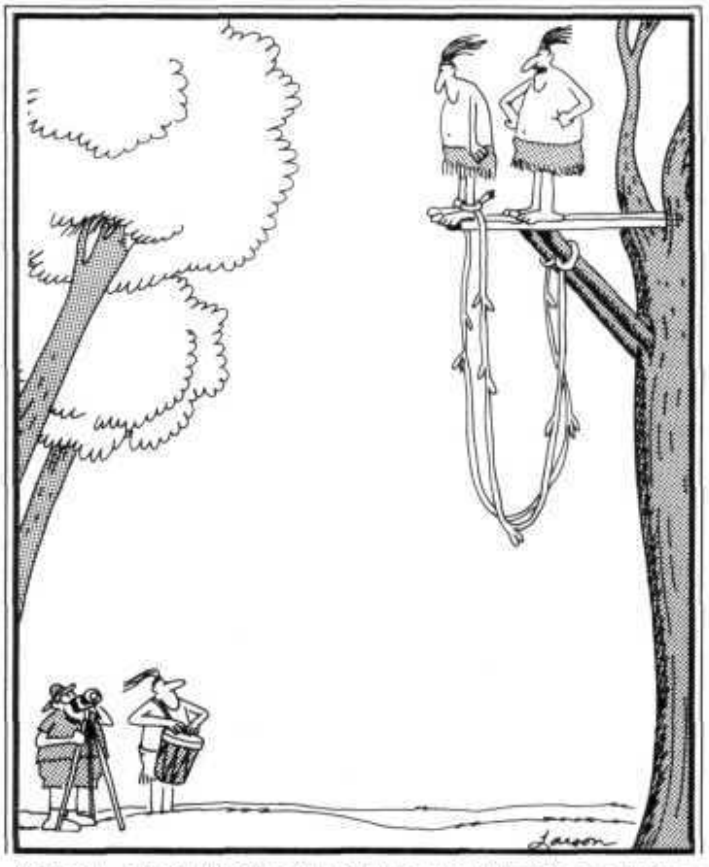


"Well, every dog has his day."

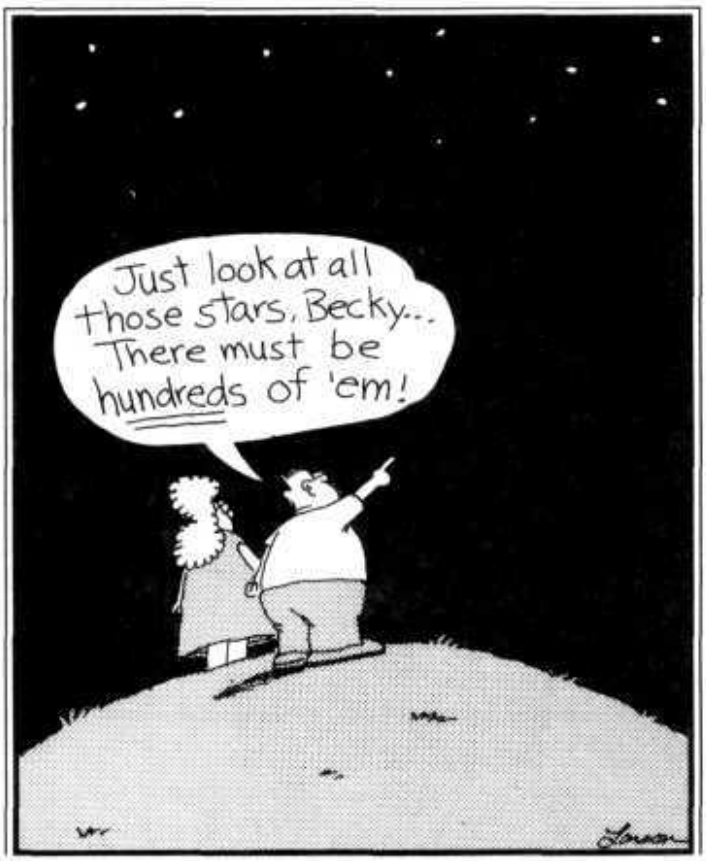


"Oh yeah? More like the three wise guys, I'd say."

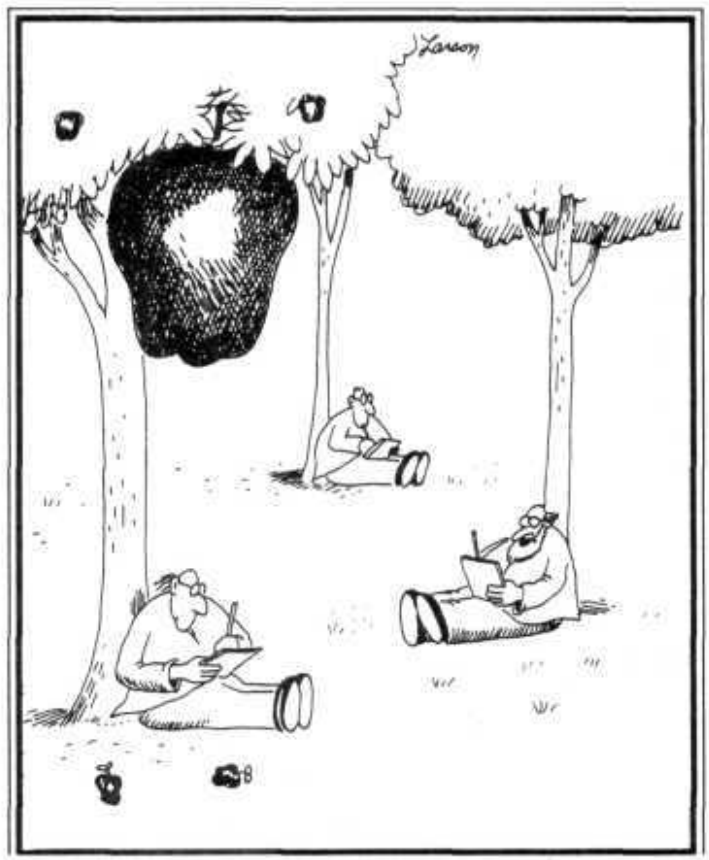
When animal mimicry breaks down



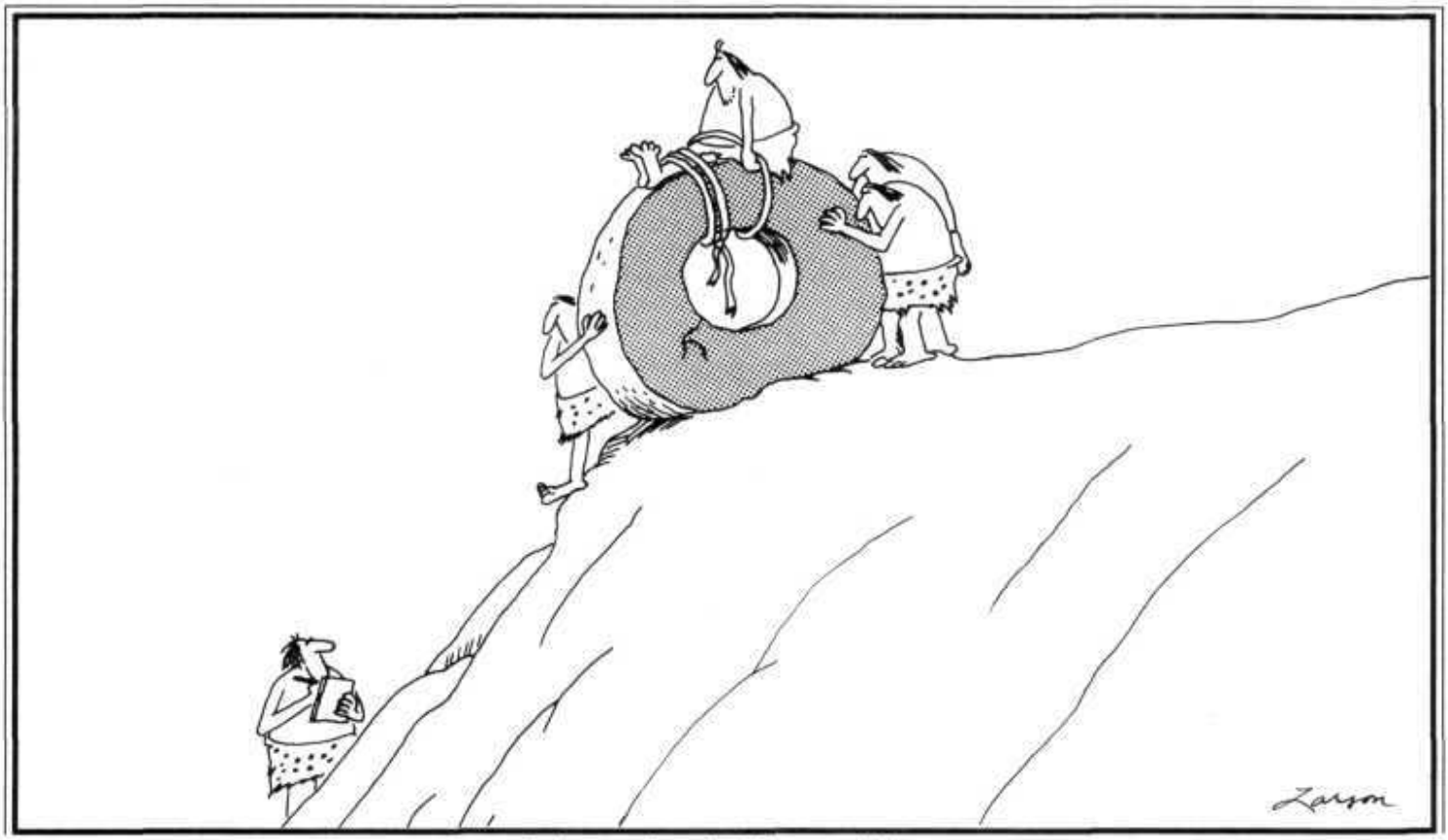
"C'mon, c'mon! You've done this a hundred times, Uzula; the vines *always* snap you back just before you hit. ... Remember, that's *National Geographic* down there."



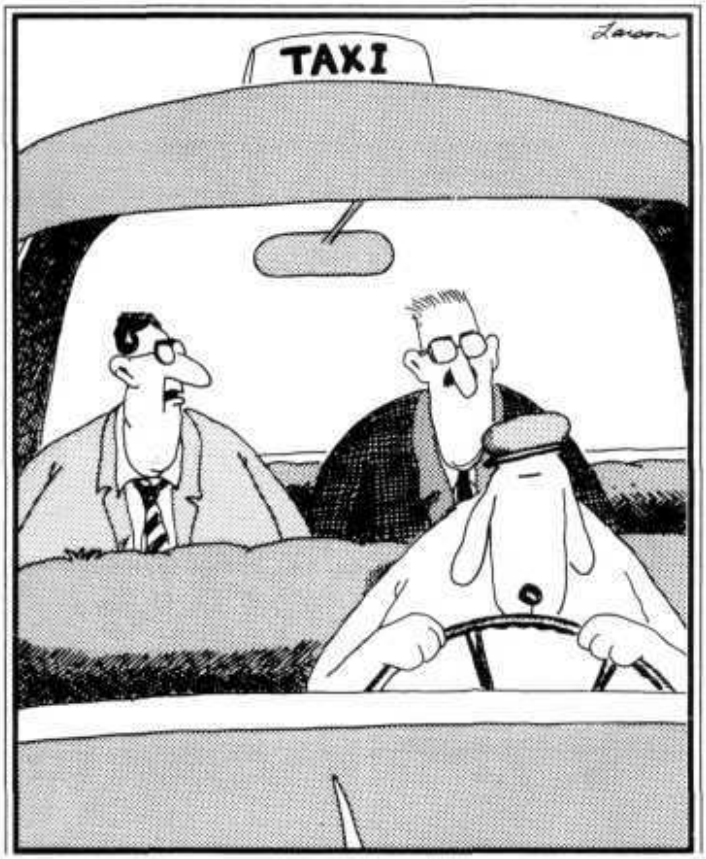
Carl Sagan as a kid



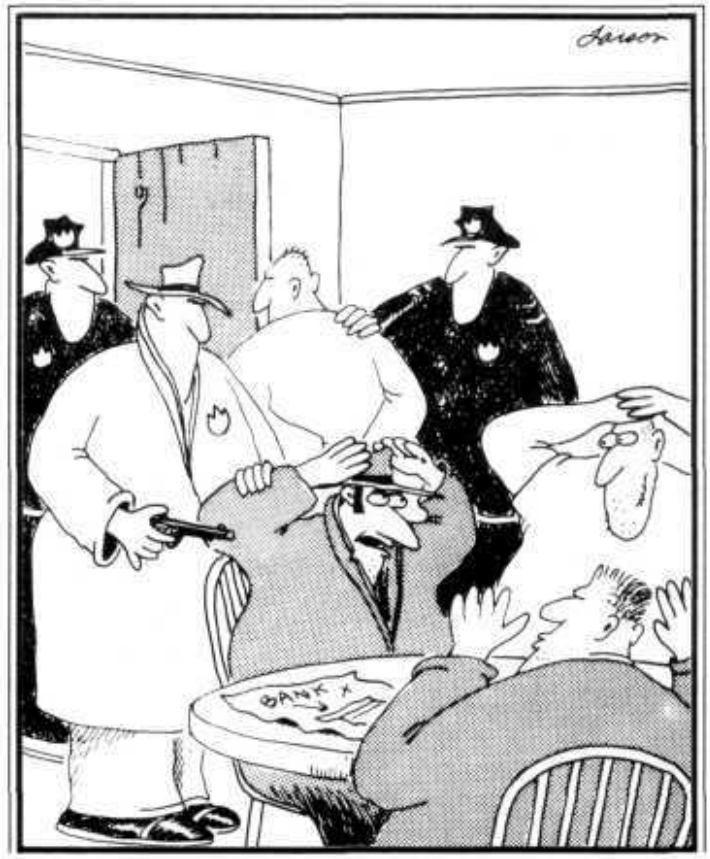
"Nothing yet. ... How about you, Newton?"



Early experiments in transportation



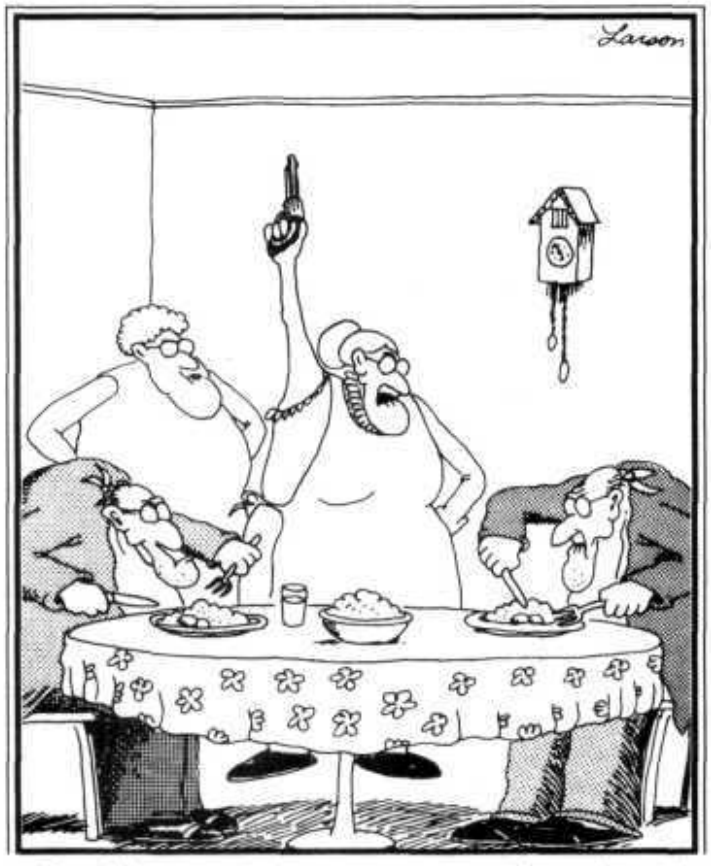
"Well, we just took the wrong exit. I know this breed, Morrison—you have to watch them every minute or wham, they'll turn on you."



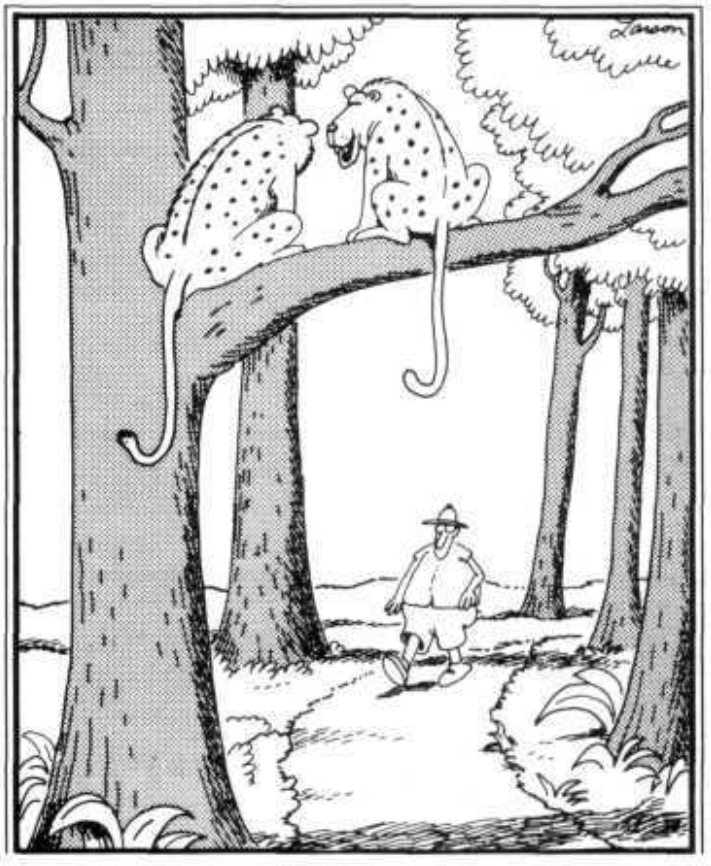
"I knew it! I just knew it ... 'Shave-and-a-Haircut' was a lousy secret knock."

"Rusty! Two points!"

"Well, there it goes again. ... And we just sit here without opposable thumbs."

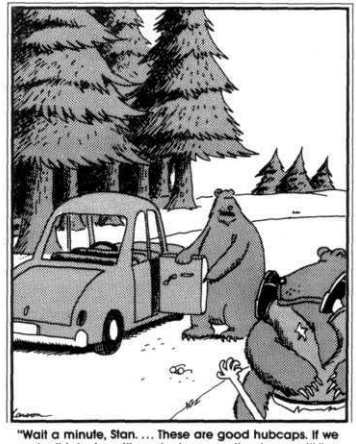


"Now listen! You both know the rules, you've got equal portions, and we're going to settle this thing once and for all ... On your mark ... Get set ..."

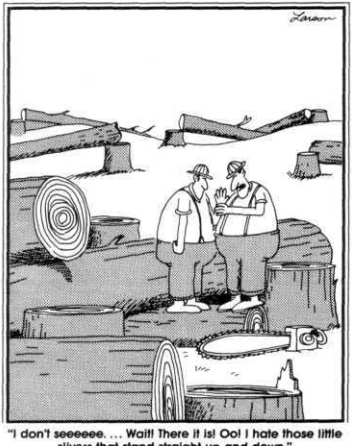


"Now remember—roar just as you leap. ... These things have some of the greatest expressions."

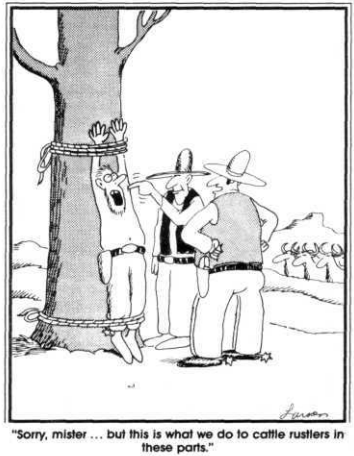
"Well, Bobby, it's not like you haven't been warned. ... No roughhousing under the hornet's nest!"



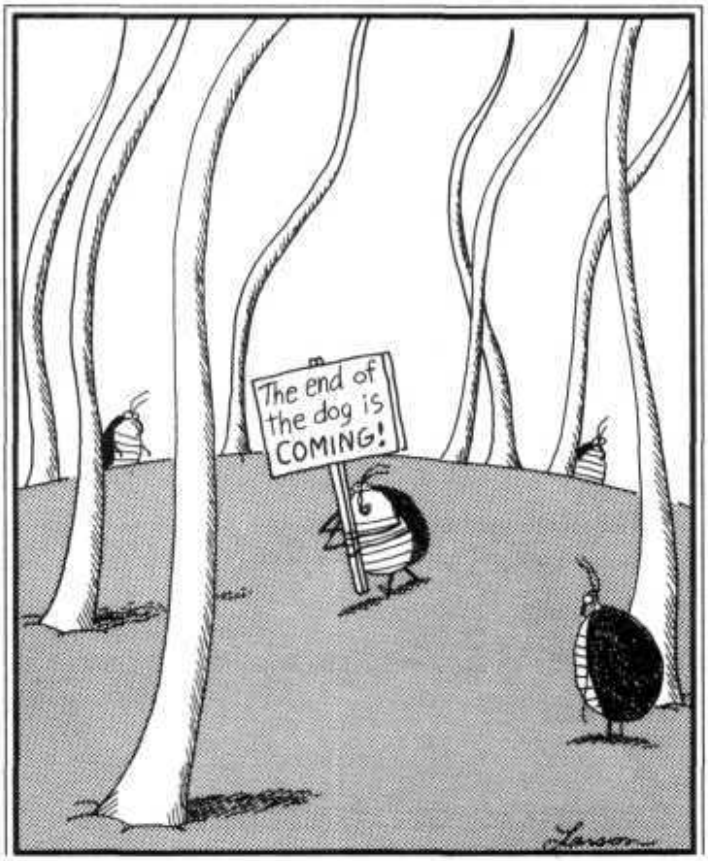
"Wait a minute, Stan. ... These are good hubcaps. If we don't take 'em, it's a cinch some other bears will."

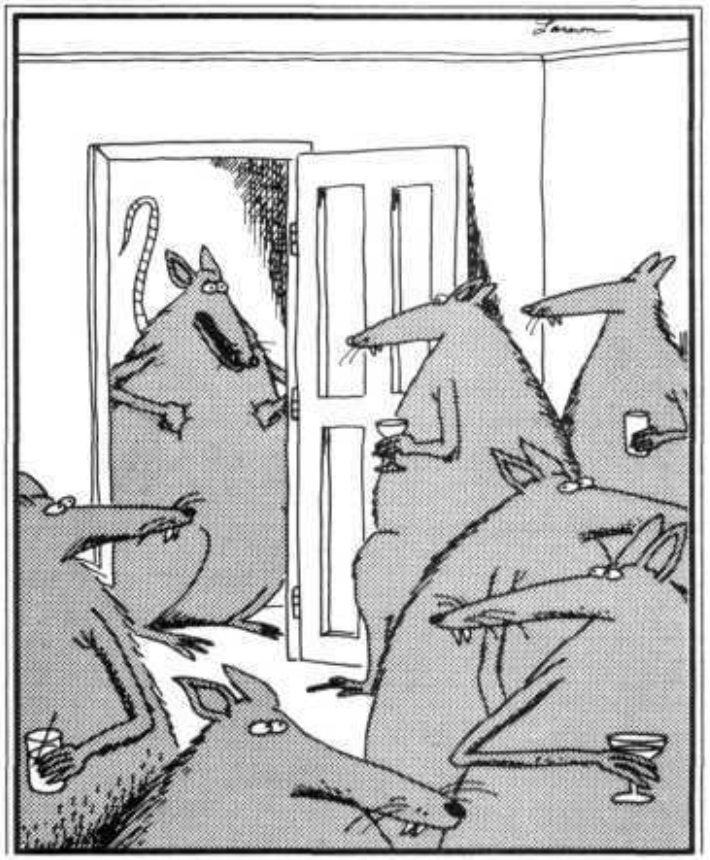


"I don't seeeeee. ... Wait! There it is! Oo! I hate those little slivers that stand straight up and down."

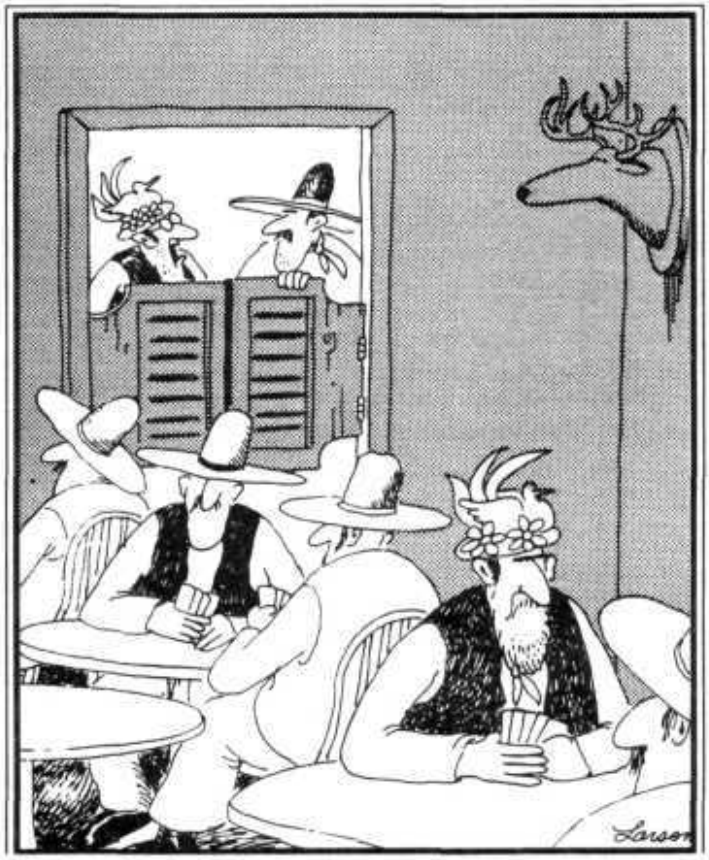


"Sorry, mister ... but this is what we do to cattle rustlers in these parts."

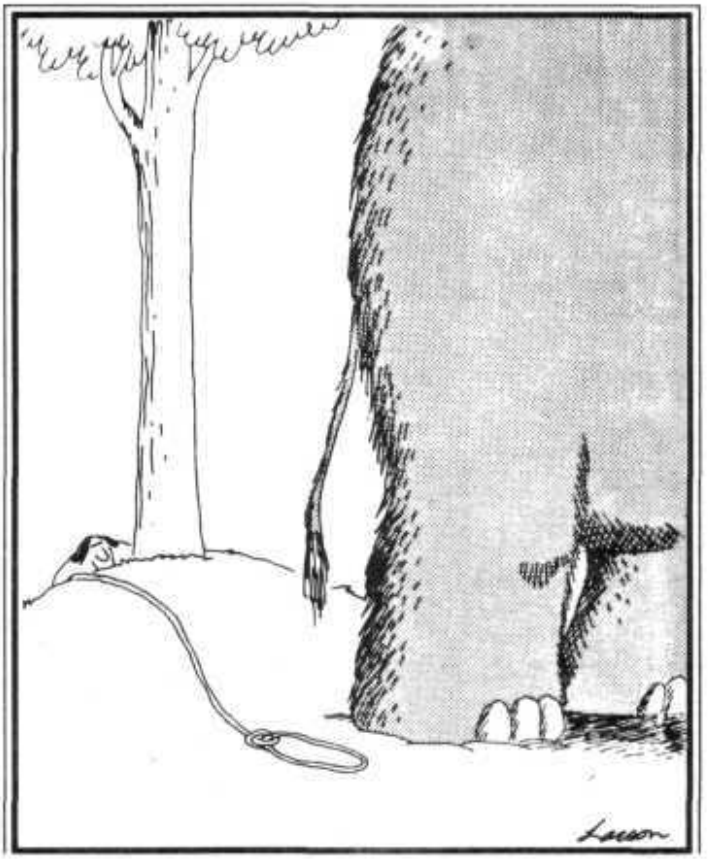




"Excuse me, but I'm trying to sleep next door and all I hear is scratching, clawing, and 'eek, eek, eek.'"



"I just CAN'T go in there, Bart! ... Some fellow in there and I are wearing the same hat!"



=== CTP ===
(read.forumsplace.com)